

THE
LOG HOUSE BY THE LAKE.

A Tale of Canada.

BY

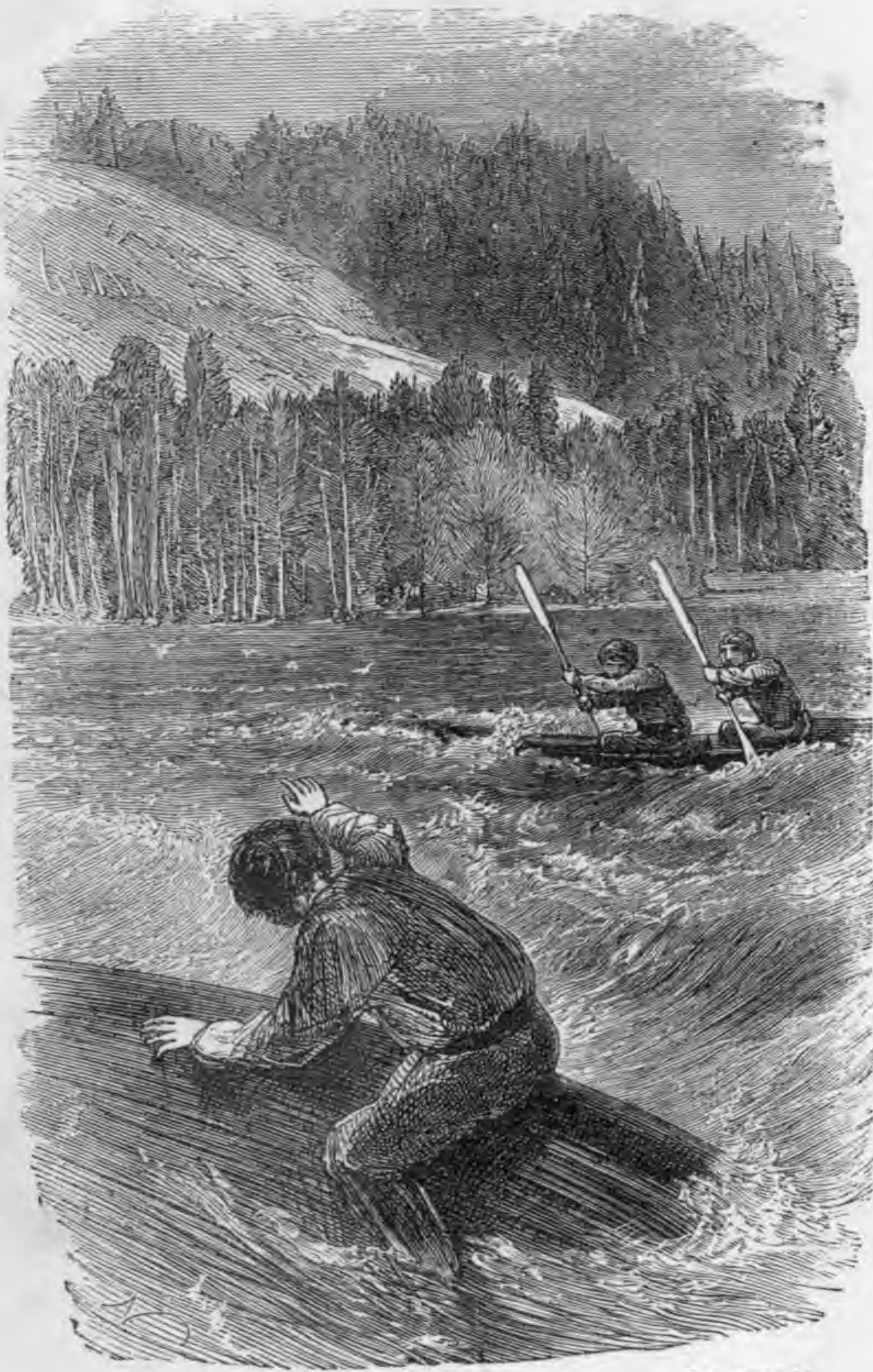
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See page 44.

THE LOG HOUSE BY THE LAKE.

CHAPTER I.

IT was late in the afternoon when Mr. Philip Ashton walked up to the door of his residence in Portman-square. His hand touched the knocker irresolutely. “It must be done,” he said to himself. “May strength be given to all of them to bear the blow!” His hand shook as he rapped. The hall door flew open, a servant in handsome livery stood ready to take his hat and gloves. As he entered the drawing-room his wife and daughters rose to welcome him, with affection beaming in their eyes, as did his three sons, who had just arrived at home from different directions. “Dear papa, you are not well,” exclaimed Sophy, his eldest daughter, leading him to a seat. “Philip, what is the matter?” asked

his wife, leaning over him.—“Sit down, dears, and I will tell you,” he answered, pressing her hand. “A severe trial has come upon us, but—” * * * * “Dear Leonard, nothing has happened to him, I pray?” gasped out Mrs. Ashton. Leonard was a sailor son, the only one now absent.—“Thank Heaven he is well; I had a letter from him only to-day,” answered Mr. Ashton. “Many mercies are granted us, and I trust, therefore, that you will all submit to be deprived, without murmuring, of the wealth we hitherto have thought our own. Dear ones, the law-suit has been decided against us!”

The young Ashtons were silent for some minutes, but presently recovered themselves. “We can all work,” exclaimed the three sons, in a breath. “Our happiness does not consist in this,” said Sophy, glancing round the room. “We will make the smallest cottage comfortable for you, mamma.” “I am sure we can, and do all the work ourselves,” cried Fanny, her next sister. “I can make a pudding, and churn, and could soon learn how to milk a cow,” said Agnes, the third daughter, laughing. “I have always wished to live in

a cottage in the country." "I've arranged it," said Fanny. "Agnes shall be cook, I will be waiting-maid, Sophy housekeeper, Philip bailiff, Harry gardener, and Charley—oh, let me consider—general farm-servant: won't that be excellent?"

"But you place your mother and me on the shelf," said Mr. Ashton, his spirits reviving from seeing the way in which his children bore the announcement he had so dreaded making. "What are we to do?"—"O papa, of course you and mamma are to do nothing. We are all to work for you," exclaimed Harry, a fine youth of fourteen, who looked as if there was indeed work in him. "Of course," added Charley. "How we ought to thank you, papa, for having us taught carpentering, and that we all have such a fancy for gardening. John says, too, that I know almost as much about pigs and cows and sheep as he does; and as for Phil, he knows more about everything than all of us put together."

Philip—Mr. Ashton's eldest son—had not spoken after he had first expressed his feelings with his brothers. His thoughts were elsewhere. A bright airy castle he had lately

raised, had just been hurled rudely to the ground, and he was stunned by the crash.

Mr. Ashton retired to rest that night with a mind greatly relieved. He had not doubted the affection of his children, and he was assured that it would enable them to bear their reverse of fortune with cheerfulness. When he rose in the morning he prayed earnestly for strength to go through the work required of him, and that is never denied to those who seek it from Him who can alone afford it. In all the work he received able assistance from his son. Philip had not left a single debt unpaid at the University, by which, under his altered circumstances, he might ever afterwards have been hampered. Mr. Ashton having never allowed household bills to run on, was comparatively free from debt.

All his affairs arranged, he found himself with an income—arising from a settlement on his wife—of two hundred pounds a-year, and about fifteen hundred pounds in ready money. Once more his family being assembled, he pointed out to them that though their plans were very good, if they were to remain a united

family they must look to the future, and seek in another country the opportunity of developing their energies. "What do you think of Canada?" he asked.—"A capital country!" cried Charley, who, as the youngest, spoke first. "I know all about the sleighing, and the skating, and the ice-boats, and the coasting down snow-hills, and the shooting huge deer, and the snow-shoeing, and the sailing on the lakes, and the fishing, and the sporting of all sorts,—not a country like it, I should say."

"It's a country for hard work, I know," said Harry. "Nothing I should fancy so much as cutting down trees, building log huts, fencing in fields, and ploughing and reaping. Ever since I read 'Laurie Todd' I have wished to go there." Philip and his sisters expressed themselves equally ready to emigrate.

No time was lost in making the necessary preparations, after it was resolved that they should go to Canada. It was highly gratifying to them to find that several of their servants wished to accompany them. Two only, however, could be taken. Of these Mrs. Summers had been the nurse of all the younger

children, and had lately acted as housekeeper. “It would break my heart, marm, if you were to go out to a strange country, and I, who am still strong and hearty, not to be with you to help you in all your troubles,” she said, with tears in her eyes, to Mrs. Ashton. “Though you take them like an angel, marm, they are troubles.” The other, Peter Puckle by name, had been first stable-boy, then page, and lately footman. He engaged Harry to plead his cause. “The wages and the passage-money shan’t stand in the way, Master Harry,” he urged. “I have not been in the family all these years without laying by something, and it’s the honour of serving your good father still is all I want.”

The surface of the broad Atlantic was scarcely ruffled by a breeze as the steamer with the Ashton family on board rushed across it. “Well, Sophy, I declare it is worth being ruined for the sake of the fun we have on board,” exclaimed Charley, to his eldest sister, who was sitting reading on deck, at a short distance from the rest of the party. A gentleman standing by heard the remark, and finding Charley by himself directly afterwards,

he observed, smiling, "Why, my young friend, you do not look as if you were ruined. I have never met a happier family than yours appears to be. What did you mean by saying that?"

—“Well, I do not think that we are ruined really, sir,” said Charley, artlessly; “still, my papa had many thousand pounds a-year till lately, and we lived in a large house in London, and had another in the country, and Philip was at Oxford and Harry at Eton, and I was going there; and now we are to live in a log hut in the back woods in Canada, and that makes us all so jolly, because it will be such capital fun. Don’t you think so?”

“I have had some experience of life in the back woods,” answered the gentleman. “It has its advantages and its disadvantages, though I have little doubt but that you will find it pleasant.” “What, do you live in Canada, sir?” asked Charley.—“Yes; I have lived there all my life,” said the stranger. “But, my young friend, you say that you are ruined, and yet I see that you have servants attending on you: how is that?”—“Why, they insisted on coming, and would not leave us,” answered Charley. “Would more have

accompanied you?" enquired the stranger.
"I am afraid, though, that my questions may appear impertinent."—"If papa would have let them," said Charley. "That fact speaks volumes in favour both of masters and servants," said the stranger to himself.

From that day Charley looked upon the stranger as an especial friend, though he could learn little more about him than that his name was Norman. At length the St. Lawrence was reached, and the Ashton family landed safely at Quebec, the chief port of the superb province which the gallantry of Wolfe won for England, and which, mainly by the perseverance and energy of Anglo-Saxon inhabitants, has become one of the brightest jewels in the British crown.

CHAPTER II.

"We have gained the day, Mrs. Ashton! We have gained the day, girls!" exclaimed Mr. Ashton, rushing with his hat on into the small sitting-room of a red brick house in a dull street of a country town in England. Various exclamations broke from the lips of Mrs. and the Misses Ashton at this unexpected announcement. For reasons best known to himself, Mr. John Ashton had not informed his wife and daughters of the law-suit going on between himself and his relative, Mr. Philip Ashton. "Guess the amount!" he exclaimed. That was impossible. "What do you think of six thousand a-year? Every shilling of it, and under my management it will become ten thousand; aye, and more than that, probably." It was some time before the Ashtons could realize the fact of this good fortune, as they called it; but as they realized it their ideas expanded, their aspirations increased. Their eldest son, John,

lately articled to an attorney, must be entered at Oxford; the second, apprenticed to a draper, was sent off to Germany to grow whiskers and a moustache, lest any of the country gentry should recognise him as having measured out ribbons for them from behind the counter; while the youngest was taken from the Grammar-school and sent off, much against his will, to form aristocratic acquaintances at Eton. The great ambition of the Miss Ashtons was to shine in London society. Their father boasted that money could do everything. It enabled him to obtain a handsome house, equipage, and establishment, and then to commence their career in the world of fashion. There were three Miss Ashtons. The two eldest were considered beauties; the youngest, Mary, had been absent on a visit, and did not return home till her father was on the point of setting off for London.

"Father, I wish to speak to you alone," said Mary, on the evening of her arrival. Mr. Ashton led the way to his office at the back of the house. He had considerable respect for Mary, though he tried not to show it. "Father, I hope that you will not con-

sider I have been wanting in duty in having refrained from writing what I now wish to tell you," she began. Mr. Ashton looked uncomfortable, but nodded for her to continue, which she did. "While I was with Mrs. Musgrave, at Scarborough, a gentleman of our name, who happened to be there with some members of his family, was introduced to me. Mrs. Musgrave was much pleased with him—we saw him frequently—he at length proposed to me, and feeling sure that you would approve of him, I accepted him." "What is his name?" asked Mr. Ashton, sharply. "Philip Ashton; —he is most worthy—most excellent," answered Mary, trembling at her father's tone. "He is all——!" "He is a beggar!" exclaimed Mr. Ashton, vehemently. "You will have nothing more to say to him; you understand me clearly; it is not a matter I wish to discuss." Rising from his seat he led the way out of the room.

Two days afterwards Mary received a letter from Philip Ashton, freeing her from her engagement to him in consequence of their altered circumstances, but couched in terms which more than ever convinced her that he

was worthy of her best affections. The family arrived in London, and by dint of perseverance, managed to engage in a whirl of dissipation, which they called pleasure. Mary's cheeks grew paler than they were wont. Her sisters said that it was the effect of the London season. John, voting Oxford a bore, came to London, and without much difficulty, obtained the character of a fashionable young man about town. It might have been doubted whether Mr. Ashton himself derived full advantage from his large income. Few of his guests knew him by sight, and he had often to steal off to bed fatigued with his labours as director of numerous promising speculations in which he had engaged to increase his fortune. Altogether the Ashton family were very busily employed. Some might say that they were like those who "sow the wind to reap the whirlwind." We gladly quit them to follow the fortunes of their emigrant cousins.

CHAPTER III.

CANADA is now traversed from one end to the other by railways, with numerous ramifications to the north and south, while steam-vessels run not only on its main artery — the St. Lawrence—and the great chain of lakes, but also on numerous other rivers and lakes in every direction on the lines of the highway to any inhabited district. Notwithstanding this, the romance of travelling through Canada is not altogether done away with. Although several of the chief cities contain very large populations, Montreal having 100,000 inhabitants, and Quebec and Toronto not many thousands less, and possessing likewise all the advantages required by civilized communities, yet a very few miles away from them the stranger may find himself in some wild district where he might suppose that the foot of man had never trod. In the summer, steamers on water compete with locomotives on land in conveying passengers; and when

time is not of consequence, the route by water is generally preferred.

A few days only were spent at Quebec by the Ashtons after their arrival, before they embarked on board one of those wonderful constructions, an American steam-boat, to proceed up the St. Lawrence to Montreal. The entrance was in the side of the vessel, and on the main deck, which appeared lumbered up from one end to the other with casks, chests, and packages, a flight of steps led to an upper deck, which had the appearance of a long gallery, fitted up as a drawing-room, with sofas, easy chairs, and every luxury. The glazed roof was supported by pillars, but no access could be discovered to any spot where helmsman, captain, or crew might be posted. Harry, after many enquiries, found that the wheel was on a platform on the roof forward, where the captain and pilot stood. He pronounced the vessel to be constructed on two huge arches, having a vast Thames wherry below, with a superstructure of picture galleries on a wide platform extending far over her gunwale on either side.

Montreal, the head of the ocean navigation,

was reached; and then by a series of magnificent canals the rapids of the St. Lawrence were avoided; the lake of the Thousand Isles, with their rocky bases and tree-covered summits, was passed, as were several larger and thriving towns, and Lake Ontario was entered.

At Kingston they embarked on board another steamer, which was far more like an ordinary vessel than the one they had just quitted. Who should come on board, just before she left the wharf, but Mr. Norman. A few hours afterwards, when Harry and Charley came on deck, they uttered an exclamation of surprise as they looked around. "What, is this called a lake, Mr. Norman? Why, where is the land?" "Out of sight," answered their friend, laughing. "North, south, east, west of us. It is rather hazy to the north, or you would see the pine-fringed shore. We shall soon again see it, as we have to touch at several towns on our way."

Several large vessels were met under all sail, with numerous crews, steering for the St. Lawrence. "Where can they be going

to?" said Harry. "To Liverpool, perhaps, or to some other English port, laden with wheat from the Western States," answered Mr. Norman. "Vessels have sailed all the way from Lake Superior to England."

They saw, however, more things to wonder at than can well be recounted. Not the least, in the eyes of the boys, was the fine city of Toronto, with its numerous public buildings. "Why, I thought that we were about to enter the backwoods by the time we got thus far west, and here we are in the middle of as civilized a city as any we have seen," exclaimed Harry, on their return from an excursion through Toronto. "We have many other fine towns still further west," said Mr. Norman, who had stayed at the same hotel. "If we go into the States we shall find, several hundred miles off, Chicago, which has sprung up as if by the wand of the enchanter. The secret of this rapid increase is its peculiar position at the head of a great navigable lake, with a background unrivalled in its corn-producing powers. In the course of years we may hope to see cities, towns, and villages, rising at intervals on British territory, directly

across our vast continent, united to those which have already appeared in British Columbia."

Mr. Ashton having made all the enquiries in his power as to eligible localities, set off with Philip to select a spot for the future abode of the family. He was advised to rent a partially cleared farm, but his sons especially entreated that he would purchase a tract of wild ground, that they might have the satisfaction of feeling that with their own hands they were bringing their own property from a state of nature into one of cultivation. He yielded to their wishes, though, perhaps, the plan he was advised to adopt would have more rapidly afforded them a return for their outlay, and some of the luxuries of civilization. Mr. Norman casually enquired the direction in which they proposed prosecuting their search, and on hearing that it was to the north, he remarked that he might possibly meet them.

We need scarcely say that the Ashton family employed their time profitably in seeing all that there was to be seen in Toronto, and that they made excursions to Hamilton, and to several other towns accessible by rail-

way. Mr. Ashton lost no time in searching for the desired locality, and he and Philip soon came to the conclusion that it was not a thing to be done in a hurry. Fortunately Mr. Norman did meet them, and with his assistance they at last found a spot to suit them. “The next thing you will have to do is to *get fixed*,”* he said, laughing. “You will soon find out the meaning of that term, I guess.”

* The American cant term for settled.

CHAPTER IV.

TOWARDS the close of a bright summer day, several wheeled vehicles were progressing slowly along a broad but roughish road cut through the forest in the northern part of the peninsula of Upper Canada. In colonial phrase, they were all waggons; but some carried luggage only, and one of them human beings, with a small amount of personalities, in the shape of carpet bags and hat boxes between their feet. This vehicle was a long shallow box, or it might be called a tray on wheels, with four seats across, each calculated to hold three persons, and with a box for the driver. The baggage-waggons were of the same build, without the seats, and were heavily laden with chests, casks, bales, and bedding, with other household furniture. They must have been stronger than they looked, to withstand the violent bumpings and jerks they received as they progressed along the chief highway as yet opened up in that part of the country.

The nature of the road varied very much, according to the character of the land over which it passed : now it was of corduroy—that is to say of trees laid across it, the interstices filled up with clay or sand. In a few places in the neighbourhood of saw mills, planks had been placed diagonally across the road, secured to sleepers beneath, and over these bits the horses dragged the vehicles at a speed which made the travellers wish that the whole road was formed in the same manner. This they found was called a plank road. How the machines could hold together, or the limbs of the occupants escape dislocation, seemed surprising as they surged over the first-mentioned style of road. Now and then the foundation of the road was of rock; and this though even rougher, caused no fear of its letting the carriages sink through. Here and there gravel appeared and allowed of firm footing ; but the worst parts of all were those undelightful spots called cedar swamps, across which neither plank nor corduroy had been thrown, and which caused the travellers to doubt considerably whether they and their vehicles would get across or sink beneath the

treacherous surface. In such cases, however, all hands uniting with ropes and poles, the waggons were dragged across.

No one could complain that the road did not go direct for its object; on it went, up and down hill, and across bog and stream, with the same vanishing point between the dark tall thick growing trees ever a-head. Most people would have become very weary of what they had gone through and of the prospect before them, but the travellers now proceeding along the road were the Ashton family; and Mr. Norman had prepared them fully for what they were to expect, besides which they were always inclined to make light of difficulties of every sort and kind.

Their last day's journey was drawing to a close. As they mounted to the top of a ridge of hills over which the road led, in the distance was seen the blue surface of Lake Huron, while below them appeared, surrounded by trees, a small piece of water, unnoted on most maps, though covering an area as large as all the Cumberland Lakes put together. In the smaller lake were several wooded islands, and there were promontories, and bays, and inlets,

with hills of some height near it, adding to its picturesque beauty. A wood-crowned height separated the smaller from the larger expanse of water, except in one place, where a river, or an inlet it might be called, formed a junction, which settlers on the shores of the former would not fail to prize.

"There is our future home," said Mr. Ashton, pointing to the side of the small lake nearest Lake Huron. "Philip and Peter, with the two men Mr. Norman sent up, will, I hope, have made some progress by this time, and have got a roof ready under which you may creep. We shall soon be at the village, and from thence we must cross the lake in a boat, as the road round is impassable, or rather there is no road at all."

Harry, who had a small telescope slung at his back, said that he could make out a wide clearing and a shanty in the middle of it. His parents hoped that he was correct, though his younger sisters and brother declared that they should be delighted to camp out in the bush for the remainder of the summer. It was growing dusk as the travellers entered the village, which consisted of a store, three or

four log huts, and half a dozen shanties or sheds, some the abode of man, and some of beast, and some shared by both. The store being covered in with planks, and having three stories, was the building of by far the greatest pretensions. One of the shanties was the future hotel of the place, at present, however, affording accommodation to neither man nor beast. The landlord stood at the door with his arms akimbo, and the air of a man perfectly satisfied with himself and his belongings, as he watched the approach of the waggons. He was active enough when they stopped before his abode, hoping that some of the party would become his customers.

"Well, strangers, you look spry after your journey. Glad to see you. We'll become good neighbours, I guess," was his familiar but not surly salutation. Mr. Ashton took it in good part. "Thank you, my friend, we have come along very well," he answered. "Can you tell me, Have my son and his servant been here lately?"

"Your two young men were up here not ten minutes ago. They've gone back to the boat,

I guess. They're no great hands at liquoring. If you shout they 'll hear you."

"Philip a-hoy!" shouted Harry and Charley, their shrill voices sounding clearly through the dark pine forest which shut in the settlement on either side, and sweeping over the calm waters of the lake.

"Ay, ay; all right!" was the cheerful reply, and Philip, accompanied by Peter, came rushing up in time to help his mother and sisters to unpack from their somewhat uncomfortable conveyance. "It does not do to be idle out here, and so, having our fishing gear, we were employing ourselves while waiting your arrival in catching some fish for your supper," he said, as he helped his mother to the ground. "Mr. Job Judson here did not quite approve of our proceeding, as he would rather we had spent the time in his bar; however, I have brought him up some of the proceeds of our sport to propitiate him, for he is an obliging, good-natured fellow, at bottom. I wish him a better calling."

After all the family had alighted, and their affectionate greetings were over, Philip exhibited the fine white fish he had brought for

Mr. Judson, weighing some four or five pounds. "We have half-a-dozen similar fish for our family supper, so we shall not starve," he said, with a tone of satisfaction. "We have not broached a cask of beef or pork since we came here." "And we shall not, I hope, while a bird or beast remains to be shot, or a fish to be caught," cried Harry.

As there was not a hut vacant in which to store the lading of the waggons, Philip arranged to take the family across in the boat, with their bedding and other necessary articles, and to return at once for the remainder. "I am sure that if D'Arcy knew it he would help, but we shall have a full moon up presently, and I would rather get the work done now than wait for day, when the heat on the lake will be considerable," he observed.

Mr. Judson undertook to watch the luggage. "Not that there's much need of that," he remarked, "for the Injuns about here is honest fellows, and there isn't a white settler who'd touch as much as a h'aporth of baccy, 'cept maybe a newly-arrived Irishman, who hasn't learnt the ways of the country."

The boat was of good size, calculated for

the waters of Lake Huron, and fitted with mast and sails, though these were not now used. The lake was smooth as glass, reflecting the bright stars from the clear sky, and broken only by the fish which here and there rose to the surface, showing their size by the loud sound of the splashes they made. The irregular borders of the lake rose clear and well-defined on every side a-head, appearing to be of considerable height, almost mountains, in the doubtful light of morning. Philip, with Harry, and Charley, and Peter, with a lad they had hired, pulled, while Mr. Ashton steered. “Row, brothers, row,” sang out Harry. “Our home is a-head, and daylight is past. I am glad that the rapids are not near, though, for with our well-freighted craft it would be a ticklish job running them, I guess.”

The moon soon rose large and clear, a brilliant globe floating in æther rather than the pale-coloured disc which it appears in England. As it shot upward in the clear sky it shed a silvery light over the scene, which became perfectly fairy-like in its beauty. “It is well worth leaving all the glare and bustle

of London for the sake of enjoying such a scene as this," said Sophy, and her sisters echoed the sentiment. "I remember just such an one on Como," observed Philip, who had made a tour on the Continent during the last long vacation. "But even if the scene we have left equalled this in beauty, I should prize this far more," replied his sister. "I will tell you why. I feel that this is our own; we are at home here, and may admire it without regret, because we know that we may enjoy it over and over again."

"Hello! what boat is that?" shouted a voice from some distance, and a dark object glided from behind a tree-covered islet they were passing, and crossed the bright pathway which the moon cast athwart the lake. "What, D'Arcy! is that you?" shouted Philip, in return. "It's myself, unless I happen to be changed into another gentleman," was the Irish-like reply. "All right, old fellow, come along. I want your promised aid," said Philip. "I have some few cargoes of goods to be transported across the lake before the moon sets, and you are the very man I was wishing for."

"Why, Philip, are you not asking too much of a gentleman who must be almost a stranger to you?" enquired Sophy, in a doubtful tone. "Not at all; we all help each other out here; I have found out that," answered her brother. "He is a capital fellow, a gentleman to the backbone, and knows that I will do the same for him with equal pleasure. We are fortunate in having such a neighbour, and from what he tells me, he hopes to have his mother and sisters out when he has got things a little square."

D'Arcy's boat was soon alongside. When he heard who had arrived, he volunteered at once to go to the settlement to begin loading his boat, that he might assist Philip when he wanted to load his. "A capital idea, D'Arcy, just like you; do so, old fellow," was all Philip said as they parted. In a short time the boat was alongside a small wooden pier, which afforded a convenient landing-place. "The house is some way up the hill; I will steer you between the stumps," said Philip, offering his arm to his mother, while the rest followed in their wake. A few minutes' walk brought them in front of a plank edifice of

the Swiss cottage style ; the defects of which, whatever they were, were not visible by moonlight. There were four doors, and as many rather diminutive windows. “ This is but a summer house, remember,” said Philip, as they stood before the long low building. “ We had to build our house according to our planks ; your room is at one end, then comes the sitting-room, and then ours, and the girls’. Remember, five days ago the foundations were not commenced. We don’t take long to raise a house in this country ;—but, enter.”

All were delighted, for although the cottage was but a long narrow shed, by means of three divisions and a liberal use of canvas and paper, Philip and his assistants had formed a neat sitting-room and two bed-rooms, besides a rougher one for himself and his brothers. In the sitting-room was a table covered with a most attractive looking meal, though decked with neither china, glass, nor plate. A bright lamp hanging from the roof lighted up the little room, and gave it much of the appearance of a cabin. “ We have only to fancy,” said Philip, “ that we are on

board ship without the danger of shipwreck, or being tumbled about in a storm, and we may congratulate ourselves on the extent of our accommodation. We have twice as many cubic feet of air for each person as the passengers on board an emigrant ship, and can admit as much more as we please. There, make yourselves at home. Father will now do the honours, and Jem is boiling the kettle for tea in the kitchen. I must be off, and hope to be back soon with D'Arcy and your traps."

Away went Philip down to the boat, whence his father with the rest had been bringing up her lading. Who could have recognized in the energetic, high-spirited backwoodsman Philip had become, the refined and somewhat sedate and stiff young student of a year ago. By-the-bye, the kitchen of which he spoke was a lean-to of birch bark, under which a camp stove had been placed; near it was a shed prepared for the reception of the stores, among which Peter proposed to take up his abode. Philip's plan of fitting up the cottage was much admired. To the walls and roof he had first nailed some common canvas, on

this he had pasted newspapers, which he had again covered with a common cheerful-looking paper, such as is used generally for covering walls. The table itself consisted of some rough planks nailed to tressels, and the bedsteads were formed of rough pine poles with canvas stretched across them. Shelves and pegs round the rooms would enable their inmates to keep them as neat as cabins.

The voices of the rest of the party were heard sooner than was expected. "We pressed the third boat on the lake into our service and have brought everything," said Philip, entering with a slight young man, who, in spite of a very rough, much worn costume, looked the gentleman. "I have the pleasure of introducing my friend Mr. Lawrence D'Arcy, my fellow labourer, who, let me tell you, made every inch of the furniture of our mansion in a wondrous brief time. He had not begun it yesterday morning, for he was helping me to paper the walls till nearly noon."

"It is the work of a self-taught artist," said Lawrence D'Arcy. "But, really, there is little to boast of in having put together a

few rough poles. The plan is the only thing to merit commendation."

Of course everybody thanked Mr. D'Arcy, and he at once felt himself perfectly at home. Never did the finest baronial mansion afford more satisfaction to the occupiers than did Philip's quickly-built cottage. It stood on a platform on the side of the hill, looking south over the lake, and sheltered by the ground above it from the icy blast of the north. There was not space on the platform for a larger building; but a little way off was a much wider piece of level ground, and here already logs were laid for a log house.

"The cottage was an after-thought," said Philip, showing the plan of the log house. "I knew that we could not get this fitted up in time, and planking being abundant and cheap, I bethought me of running up a plank cottage which will serve you till you can get into the more substantial mansion. With a stove and additional banking up outside it may be made warm enough even for winter."

Never was a family more busy, or one more contented and happy. "Our present abode will make a magnificent dairy when we get

into the big mansion," cried Agnes, as she saw the walls of the log house quickly rising. "How clean and nice the pans will look arranged round the walls and the churn in the middle." Your notions are rather too grand, I fear, dear," said her mother. "We have only got one cow, and there will be room here for the milk of fifty." "Ah! but the day will come when we may have fifty. That beautiful meadow by the side of the stream to the right will feed almost that number," said Agnes. "I should be content with four or five, so that we may make our own butter and cheese, and have cream and milk in abundance," observed Fanny. "I should like to have time to attend to our garden, and poultry, and pigs; and then, remember, we are not to grow into savages, so we must have reading, and keep up our music and drawing, and then there will be all sorts of household work to attend to."

Sophy sided with Fanny, and Philip put an end to the discussion about the dairy, by telling them that he had calculated on using up the planks of the cottage for the flooring of part of the new house.

That building got on with wonderful rapidity. Day after day Mr. Lawrence D'Arcy came over with his man Terry, a faithful fellow, born on his father's estate in Ireland, who had been his servant in the army for several years. Philip had, for the purpose of economizing heat and saving roofing, resolved to make the house of two stories. The walls were formed of horizontal logs; the upper part of each log was scooped out so as to admit the round of the one above it to fit in, and the ends were deeply notched for the logs forming the walls at a right angle to it. A height sufficient for the ground floor chambers having been gained, notches were cut and the rafters placed across. Shears were erected to raise the higher logs, and shingles, which are thin split planks of fir, formed the roof. The house stood on a platform to raise it above the snow; the floor being thus some way from the ground. A verandah ran round the whole building, affording a sheltered walk when the inmates might not otherwise be able to get fresh air.

Had not the settlers been so strong handed, the work now accomplished could not have been performed before the winter; but it was

the fable of the bundle of sticks exemplified. Such a building would not have been attempted except for the sake of the ladies, as the settlers would have employed all their strength in preparing the ground for cultivation. That necessary proceeding was not however neglected, and six acres were chopped and burnt off before the snow covered up the brushwood.

"Here we are, fairly settled in our log house," said Mr. Ashton, as he surveyed the result of his son's architectural skill. "Let us with grateful hearts thank our Heavenly Father who has led us thus far in safety."

CHAPTER V.

THERE were signs that the winter was about to begin. Snow-storms had appeared from over the hill and swept across the lake. Ice had formed around the edges in shallow pools, but the hot sun had come out and completely thawed it. Often among the pine woods the heat was excessive. Had it not been for the rich growing tints of the trees which fringed the lake and covered its islets, it would have been difficult to suppose that summer had passed away. There were the bright reds and yellows of the maple, the pale straw-colour of the beech, the copper hues of the oaks; and, indeed, Sophy found that she could exhaust all the brightest colours of her paint-box, and yet not give sufficient variety or brilliancy to portray correctly the gorgeous tints of the landscape spread out before the window; nor was there blue to be found equal to the blue of the lake, still less of the sky above it. She was glad that she had finished

her drawing in time, for a strong north wind sprang up, and a sharp frost sent every leaf, pinched off, flying away, and the next morning a few only hanging to dead boughs gave a somewhat warm tinge to the otherwise dark green and dark brown appearance of the lake shore.

"Excellent! it would give my dear people at home some idea of the beauties we have out here," exclaimed D'Arcy, who happened to look in the day Sophy had finished her sketch. "I should be so thankful if you could make a copy for me; still more so if I might aspire to possess the original."

"What could have made Sophy blush so just now?" said Charley to Agnes, after D'Arcy had taken his leave. "There the dear thing stands looking at the lake: what a wonder to see her doing nothing."

D'Arcy leaped gaily into his boat, hoisted the main-sail, a large one for her size, cast off the painter, and hauling aft the main-sheet as she paid-off with the fore-sail, waved an adieu to his friends on shore. The lake sparkled brightly as miniature waves curled over its surface; faster and faster the boat

flew amid them, seeming to delight in her freedom. The breeze freshened; a black cloud came up along the course of the river from Lake Huron; it rushed across the sky, followed by others, casting a shadow over the lake. A shriek from Sophy made Philip rush out from his workshop, saw in hand, followed by Harry. The white sail of D'Arcy's boat had disappeared, and a dark mass was alone visible on the spot where she had been.

"He is a good swimmer, and will have got upon the bottom," cried Philip; but his heart misgave him, for the cold wind had made D'Arcy put on his thick coat and heavy boots. Harry ran towards their large boat. The sails and oars were on shore. "No, no,—the canoe!" cried Philip. An Indian hunter, a friend of D'Arcy's, had left his canoe on the beach in the morning. The paddles were in her. To launch her and step gingerly in was the work of an instant; and fast as Philip and Harry could ply their paddles, the light canoe flew across the lake.

The rest of the family were soon on the shore; Mr. Ashton, who saw the danger to which his sons were exposed in their eagerness

to save their friend, watching their progress with the greatest anxiety. He unfortunately did not understand the management of a boat as did his sons; nor did Peter, or he would have gone after them. The canoe tossed up and down, apparently scarcely able to buffet with even the small waves, to the lashing of which she was exposed. Still Philip and Harry bravely pursued their course, their eyes straining a-head, and utterly regardless of the danger they themselves were running.

"Phil, can you see him?" cried Harry. "I think I do. Yes, surely, there's something moving on the boat's keel." "Yes, I hope so: he's lying his length along it; he could not sit up," answered Philip. "How bitterly cold the wind blows out here." "Yes, he will be almost frozen, poor fellow; he will lose his boat, too," said Harry. "Shall we carry him on to his place, or back to our own?" "Certainly, to ours. In his own hut he has no one to look after him properly; while with us he will have no lack of nurses," remarked Philip. "Paddle away, Harry; he sees us." "Hurrah, D'Arcy!" cried Harry, "we are coming to you, old fellow." A hand

was seen to wave in return to Harry's cheer.
“All right—all right!” cried Harry, delighted,
“he is there and alive!”

D'Arcy had managed to get one of his boots off, but he had great difficulty in clinging to the keel. He did not cry out to his friends to make haste, for he knew that they were doing their utmost to reach him. They encouraged him, however, to hold on; for they judged, by the chilly blast which swept across the lake, that he must be numbed and fainting. At length they got alongside the boat; and now the greatest caution was necessary, lest, in taking him in, the canoe should be capsized. The boat likewise, on being touched, might roll up, and with her mast stave in the fragile side of the canoe. It seemed almost impossible to accomplish their object without upsetting themselves. Those who know what a birch-bark canoe is like will best understand the difficulty. “Take me in by the head,” said D'Arcy; “I'll crawl in.” They accordingly paddled round to the stern of the boat, to which Philip made the bow of the canoe fast, and he was then able to reach over sufficiently to take hold of D'Arcy's hands, and

to drag him on till he could place one foot on each gunwale of the canoe, and then, by drawing himself back, he took the weight off the bow and gradually drew his friend on board. D'Arcy's knees, however, very nearly went through the thin bottom. He asked them to continue on to his clearing, that he might get off again and try to save his boat; but Philip would not hear of it. "No, no," he answered, "she will drift on shore not far off, and we shall easily be able to find her; and you will catch your death of cold if you are not looked after immediately." "But poor Terry will go out of his mind if he supposes that I am lost," argued D'Arcy. "We will try to let him know," said Philip. "Besides, at our place, if we go on, they will not know whether we are all lost, or you are saved."

This settled the question. "There, lie down at the bottom, and we will cover you up with our jackets," said Philip. "Give way, Harry."

To paddle back in the teeth of the freezing wind was no easy work, and more than once Philip wished that, for his friend's sake, he had gone on to his clearing; still, he guessed

rightly, that every means to prevent injurious effects would be got ready. Manfully they paddled on, but the spray from the small but quick-coming waves dashed in their faces, and the slightest cessation of exertion allowed the light canoe to be blown back again like a feather before the breeze. Nobly they persevered. Once under the lee of the land, they knew that their progress would be more rapid. At last they caught sight of their own landing-place. Philip gave a flourish with his paddle, and pointed to the bottom of the canoe. The communication was understood, and a door, with blankets, were ready to carry D'Arcy up to the house. He begged, however, to be allowed to walk up, declaring that he was well able to do so, though he did not object to having a couple of blankets thrown over his shoulders. He found, however, that he had miscalculated his strength, and without help he could scarcely move. The next morning the effects of the wetting and exposure were more conspicuous, and all the skill of Nurse Summers was required to bring him round. For several days he was kept in bed, and even when he was able to get up, the

Ashtons would not let him leave them. "You are utterly unfit for work, my dear fellow," said Philip. "You will get well here much faster than sitting over the fire in your own shanty, and leave Terry more at liberty to go on with your house. He is contented enough now he knows we have you in safe keeping."

It was wonderful with what equanimity Mr. D'Arcy consented to remain the guest of the Ashtons. He was not idle, for he read while the ladies worked, taught Charley to net, and took Philip's place as his school-master in the evening, and imparted a large stock of back-woodsman's lore to all the family. Philip and Harry had, directly they returned after rescuing him, set off in their big boat, and arrived at his clearing in time to prevent poor Terry from going out of his mind, which he was nearly doing at seeing his master's boat drift by, and believing he was lost. They found him wringing his hands, and uttering a truly Irish lament as he contemplated the boat which had driven on shore a short distance from the cottage shanty. So occupied had he been in watching the upset boat that he had not observed their approach.

“ Och ! sad’s the day; and I’ll never more be after seeing him again, the dear young masther, barrin’ it’s his corpse is sent up by the cruel waves on the shore, and I’ll be left all alone in this desart counthry to bury him, the last hope of the D’Arcys, instead of in the tomb of his ancestors in ould Ireland. And what ’ll the poor misthress be doing when she hears the news ? sorrow a bit could my hand write the words ; I couldn’t do it even if I had the ’art, nor my tongue tell it, I’d sooner cut it out of my mouth ; and sweet Misthress Katharine and Misthress Lily, they ’ll cry their pretty eyes out, they will.” Again he set up a long, melancholy howl, not unlike that of a dog baying at the moon. The sound of the Ashtons’ boat touching the shore made him look up, with an expression of hope in his countenance, as if he expected to see his master, but it suddenly changed to one of still greater sorrow when he discovered that he was not of the party. Philip, eager to soothe his anxiety, shouted out, as he stepped on shore, “ Rouse up, Terry, we have him all safe on shore, only rather wet and cold.” “ Is it the thruth ye are spaking, Masther Philip ? ”



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D

Arrah, an' I'm shure it is," cried Terry, rushing towards him with frantic gestures of delight. "Just say that word again, he's safe, an' blessins on yer honest face, for I'm shure ye could not desave a poor gossoon like myself." Philip repeated his assertion, and was not a little astonished to find himself seized in Terry's arms, and hugged till the breath was nearly out of his body. The honest fellow's feelings then gave way in a burst of tears, which flowed while he apologised for the liberty he became conscious he had taken.

D'Arcy's stay with his friends was prolonged over several days, and it was not till he was perfectly recovered that they would allow him to go back to his clearing. He found several subjects to ponder on when he got there.

CHAPTER VI.

THE south wind blew softly, the air was pure and balmy, the sun shone brightly, and the waters of the lake vied with the sky in the clearness of its azure tints. The birds too were warbling forth a happy song; not, however, with the full swelling chorus of spring, but yet sufficiently to give cheerfulness to the otherwise silent woods. It is a calumny on the feathered tribes of Canada to assert that they have no song; the blackbird can sing when he is inclined, as sweetly as his brother in England, and the Canadian robin's notes are as full of glee as those of his smaller namesake in the old country.

"By turning our eyes from the bare maples, beeches, and oaks, towards the pine trees, we might fancy that summer had come back again," said Philip; "the Indian summer at all events. Should to-morrow be like this, I propose knocking up D'Arcy. It's some days since we heard of him, and he will be

feeling that we got tired of him with his visit here, poor fellow." "Oh! don't let him think that," exclaimed Sophy, earnestly. "No, that I will not," said Philip. "Who'll go? A little recreation will do some of us good, and we'll work all the better when we come back."

Something kept Sophy from volunteering to be of the party, but her younger sisters jumped at the proposal. "I know that you are carefulness itself, Philip," said Mrs. Ashton; "but I entreat you to have but very little sail set." "Indeed, mother, I will carry only what is absolutely necessary," answered Philip. "We need be in no hurry—if the breeze holds, we shall have a soldier's wind, fair each way."

The breeze did not hold, and towards evening a thick fog came on. During the night a curious crackling sound was heard, and when daylight returned, the whole lake appeared frozen over. The entire household was soon on foot and braving the keen frosty air, to observe the change which a few short hours had wrought. There must have been a perfect calm when the ice took, for the entire

surface of the lake was smooth as a polished mirror and of the same hue; while the surrounding trees and every shrub and blade of grass to be seen was covered with a coating of the purest white. Suddenly the sun rose above the wooded hill to the east, and the whole side of the lake on which its beams were cast, began to sparkle and flash as if covered with gems of the purest water. A light breeze waved the branches to and fro, and now they flashed and shone with increased brilliancy, fresh colours bursting into sight till not a gem was unrepresented in this gorgeous display of “nature’s jewel-box,” as Harry called it.

“Well, Fanny,” he exclaimed, “you need not regret being unable to go to court, for I am very certain that all the duchesses, and countesses, and lady mayoresses to boot, couldn’t make such a display as that.” As the warmth of the sun increased, the trees began to drip, and the lovely spectacle vanished by noon. “We need not regret it, for beautiful as it was, I believe that we may see many more to surpass it before the return of spring,” said Mr. Ashton. “Ah! little do our pity-

ing friends at home guess the ample amends which nature makes to us for what we have lost. I prize the blessings we enjoyed in England; but, after all, we have only exchanged them for others which our beneficent Maker has bestowed on us of equal value."

The ice, though bearing in some places, could not be trusted, and of course the expedition to D'Arcy's clearing was given up for the present; but in the evening, when work was over, skates were unpacked, cleared of rust, and fitted to shoes. All hands set to work with increased vigour to fell the trees, that they might be burnt off before the snow should make the operation more difficult. "Another night like the last, and I verily believe we might skate across the lake," cried Harry, rubbing his hands to restore the circulation of which the cold had deprived them.

"Look out for frost-bites, my boys," said Mr. Ashton; "Mr. Norman charged me above all things to see that you kept your hands and feet warm." The ladies of the family were busily employed in lining the boys' caps, and fixing flaps for their ears, and in making mittens and comforters. One point they had

not discovered, and had to learn by experience, the uselessness of English boots and shoes, however thick, for the bush in winter, and that nothing can surpass, and scarcely any foot-gear equal, a light shoe or slipper, with a very thick ribbed worsted sock over it, put into an india-rubber golosh, which is kept on by a high spring gaiter.* There was no longer any doubt about the ice bearing, and so, having worked hard all the morning, Philip, Harry, and Charley set off with skates on feet, the two latter in high glee at the thought of going so great a distance over the ice. They had been practising for the last three days in a shallow bay near the house, and had no misgivings as to holding out.

* An Indian mocassin over two pairs of thick socks is good in a hard frost, but gets wet through with the slightest moisture. The most important objects are to allow no pressure on any part of the foot or ankle, to keep the feet warm and protected from fallen branches or any other hard substance rising above the snow. In thawing weather high waterproof boots worn over two pairs of thick socks or stockings. The object of having the outer sock ribbed is to allow the evaporation from the skin to have space between the outer sock and the boot; the foot and inner sock will thus remain perfectly dry. The author has walked long distances with this sort of foot gear with the greatest comfort. Perfect freedom for the foot and toes is, it must be repeated, most essential.

Philip would rather have gone alone, or at all events, with Harry only; but Charley begged so hard to be allowed to accompany them that he did not like to refuse him. They expected not to be more than three hours away at the utmost. The skates were fixed firmly on the feet. Philip wisely tried his by making two or three outside edge circles and figures of eight. "Are you ready, boys? Follow your leader, and away we go." Away they went. Right leg—left leg—resting for fifteen seconds or so on each—their bodies now slightly inclined to one side, now to the other, like ships making short tacks. It was exhilarating exercise. Their spirits rose to the highest pitch as they glided on—they shouted and laughed with glee — Charley managed to keep up, but what was sport to his brothers, was rather hard work to him; still he would not beg them to slacken their speed, but kept on bravely till his legs began to ache. They had heard Philip say that they were not likely to have many such days during the winter for skating; for though there would be no want of ice, it would be soon so covered with snow, that it would be impos-

sible to get over it. They might easily, to be sure, sweep a space in the ice clear of snow, but that would be very tame work compared to flying over miles of ice as they were now doing. Charley, therefore, would not, if he could help it, ask his brothers to stop. At last he found himself falling behind. With his utmost exertions he could not keep up with them. While he was thinking whether he should call out, his foot struck something (it was the thick part of a branch which had been floating when the lake froze), and down he came. “O, Harry, Harry!” he cried out. Harry heard him, and circling round, skated back to his assistance. Philip had gone some way, when not hearing his brothers’ voices, he swept round on a half circle to ask them why they had become so suddenly dull. What was his dismay to find that they were not near him. Both were stretched their length, as it seemed, on the ice, at a considerable distance. As he turned he was conscious of a cracking noise, which seemed to pass from one end of the lake to the other. Still he must reach his brothers, or attempt to do so, even should the ice be giving way every stroke he made.

"Oh, the ice is giving way ! the ice is giving way !" cried Charley ; but though the cracking sound increased, Philip did not perceive any other sign of this being the case. "What is the matter with you, Harry ?" he asked. "Oh, I went to help Charley, and tumbled over the same log which capsized him," was the answer. "He says that the ice is giving way, and certainly the water does look terribly near to it." Such, indeed, was the case. Philip, from having kept his eyes fixed on the land-marks about D'Arcy's clearing, had not observed this so much as Harry now did, with his nose close down to it. Wisely keeping at a little distance, he advised them to crawl away from the spot where they had fallen, and then, a little apart from each other, to get on their feet and proceed. Once more they were on their course, but Philip made them keep one on each side of him, going at a less speed than before. It was nervous work, though, for the cracking noise increased in loudness till it rivalled that of thunder—seeming to pass under their very feet. Speed and lightness of tread was everything. For himself Philip had no fear. He dreaded only

lest Charley should again fall, and so did his best to keep up his spirits, and to banish the nervousness from which he saw that he was suffering. As they neared the shore the noises ceased and their spirits rose, though they were not sorry to see D'Arcy standing on the beach to receive them.

His greeting was cordial. "I have been watching you for some time, and did I own a pair of skates I should have come out to meet you," he said. "When you all stopped, I began to form a sleigh to push off to your assistance, in case any one of you should have been hurt, when I observed that you were all on the move again. Instead, therefore, of going on with it, I sent in Terry to cook some dinner, which you will be wanting after your long fly."

The dinner was the usual bush fare—pork and potatoes (forming an Irish stew), fish, caught before the frost began, and a dumpling, which probably had been thought of only when the guests were first descried in the distance. The young men did ample justice to the feast, and perhaps spent a longer time over it than they intended. They had plenty to say, about

their own experiences especially; and when the young Ashtons compared notes with D'Arcy, they had reason to consider their own trials far less than his. He had been left alone to fight the battle of life, or rather with a mother and sister depending on him. After a once fine property which he had nominally inherited had been sold in the Irish Incumbered Estates Court, he had found himself with the merest pittance on which to support them. With a small sum he had embarked for Canada, and was now forming a home for those he loved so well. There were numbers of men in similar positions, of whom he knew in the neighbourhood and in different parts of the province—not all, however, doing equally well—some were successful, and they were the sober, industrious, and judicious; others were in a bad way, mostly for the best of reasons, because they were idle, and had taken to drinking—not hard drinking, perhaps. “That is not necessary to ruin a fellow,” said D'Arcy. “I know several of the description I speak of,—gentlemen of birth and education. There is one especially, who, probably, begins the day after break-

fast by smoking a pipe or two, then takes axe or spade in hand, and coming in to an early dinner feels his solitude, and that he must have a talk with somebody. Instead of continuing his work, he mounts his cob, after taking a glass or two of rum or whiskey grog —the more out of spirits he feels the stiffer it is—and rides off to knock up some neighbour, perhaps his equal, or perhaps utterly unfit to be his companion, as far as social intercourse is concerned. On the way he looks in at the store-house; he has an account, and takes a glass or two more, desiring that it may be put down to him. Of course he never recollects how many glasses he has had, nor how his account is swelling. He finds his friend, brings him in (probably not unwillingly) from his work, and the two spend the rest of the day together. He may find his way home at night, or he may take a shake-down, and, rising with a splitting headache, find himself utterly unable to do anything. He is going to the bad very rapidly. His friends in England send him out money occasionally, under the belief that it is spent on the farm, but it all goes to pay off the

storekeeper's account. Had it not been for this assistance he would have knocked up long ago. As it is, I expect that he has already mortgaged his farm, for a small amount, may be; but it's a beginning—a second will follow—it is so easy an operation, and the end cannot be far off. Now poor Jack Mason will go back to England, his friends helping him, and abuse Canada, and say that it is a country totally unfit for a gentleman to live in—that hardy, rough fellows may subsist, but that no one can do more—no one can make a fortune."

"A man must have energy, talent, and perseverance to succeed here, as well as at home," said Philip. "The difference is, that in England, possessing them, he may not succeed; here, possessing them, he must succeed. To commence the life of a backwoodsman, he must have health and strength, with the other qualifications you have mentioned. Once having got a footing in the country, he must watch the openings which are sure to present themselves: the man of talent will take advantage of them, and rise to wealth; the man without talent will go on slowly im-

proving his condition, and will be happy and respected. What more can a man desire?"

"I agree with you, Phil; at the same time that I intend to look out for the openings, and walk in if I can," answered D'Arcy. "When my guardians decided that I was to emigrate, or rather that they could do nothing for me at home, they liberally gave me the choice of Australia, New Zealand, the Cape, or British North America. I have an idea they cared very little where I went, so that I went away and gave them no further trouble. I had been dining the day before, in Dublin, at the mess of the — Regiment, which had just returned from Canada, and they were all high in its praise;—such pleasant quarters, such gaiety, such sleighing, shooting, fishing, boating. Several declared that they would sell out and settle there. Naturally I chose Canada, without weighing its advantages with those of the other provinces; and though I found the reality of a settler's life very different to the fancy picture I had drawn, having made up my mind to go through with it, whatever it might prove, I stuck to it, and have great reason to be thankful that I did so. Still, I

fancy that people can make fortunes in Australia much faster than one can here."

" May be so ; but fortune is not the only thing desirable," said Philip. " All settlers do not make fortunes in Australia,—we hear only of the successful ones ; and then I cannot help thinking, that our Canadian climate, with its wonderful changes, our varied scenery, our institutions, and our society,—I don't mean in such an out-of-the-way place as this, but such as are found at Toronto and elsewhere,—are items which may be placed to the credit of this Province, and give it a superiority over every other. I have often fancied that there must be something monotonous and depressing in Australian bush-life ; the very uniformity of the seasons and of the face of the country must produce this effect. However, old fellow, here we are : and whether the land be a good, bad, or indifferent land compared with others, you and I have made up our minds to make the best of it. But it is time that we were off ; we had not intended remaining so long."

Philip and his brothers started up. " You must have coffee before you go ; it is a home

manufacture, and so are all the ingredients.’’ Terry poured it out of a veritable big coffee-pot—hot, with plenty of sugar and milk. It was pronounced excellent. ‘‘ See, Harry, you and Charley may supply your family with first-rate coffee,’’ said D’Arcy. ‘‘ We shall have a thaw before the winter sets in ; dig up all the dandelion roots you can find ; dry them in the sun or in your oven for keeping ; roast them before use ; and cut them up and grind them as you would coffee-berries. This is the result. By-the-bye, Phil,’’ he added, ‘‘ you told me that you had not caught any fish lately. It is just possible that a change may be pleasant ; and if you don’t mind carrying a couple each of you, will you present them to your mother with my best compliments ? I have got them slung ready for you, so that you have only to throw them over your shoulders as you are starting.’’ He did not consider that even a few pounds weight makes a considerable difference to a skater. Philip, however, did not like to refuse his kind offer, knowing that it gave him pleasure to send the fish, and would give those at home pleasure to receive them. Terry accordingly was directed to bring out

the fish, which were hard frozen, and were slung with ropes of grass, and packed with pads of grass to keep them off the back.

D'Arcy assured them that the cracking sound they had heard was no sign of danger, but, on the contrary, showed that the ice had taken in every part.

CHAPTER VII.

As the hut was close to the lake the skates were buckled on in the warmth, and together the whole party issued forth, D'Arcy promising to come across the next day in a sleigh he had built.

During the brief period they had spent in the hut the wind had changed, and with it the weather. Thick clouds floated over-head low down, lightish in colour though dense; the air was sensibly warmer. Philip looking at his younger brother said, “Charley, I have a great mind to leave you behind; it will be harder work than coming.” But Charley considered that his manliness was disparaged, and insisted on starting. “Well, we may reach home before the snow falls,” said Philip, shaking D'Arcy's hand, and adding, “We shall all be glad to see you.”

Away they went; but not two minutes had passed before snow-flakes began to fall, a few only settling on their faces. They were tho-

forerunners of others; thicker and thicker they fell; now they rushed down hurriedly, covering the surface of the lake with a white sheet. Did the brothers hear D'Arcy's voice joined with Terry's shouting to them to come back? They had, however, got so far on their way that, even had they been certain of the fact, they would not have liked to do so. On they at all events went. Philip kept his eyes fixed on his own hill, but the outline soon became very dim. Thicker and thicker fell the snow; still they were in their proper course, Philip thought. "Can you make out the hill, Harry?" he asked. "No, Phil; cannot you?" answered Harry: "what's to be done?" "Push on, of course; the snow may stop falling, and we may see our way again," said Philip.

The snow, however, did not stop falling, but rather came down thicker and faster. Charley held out bravely, working on his way through the snow. Skating was far greater labour than before. This should not have been: hard snow would have easily been pushed aside; a part of this melted as it fell. Philip did not express his fears to his brothers,

though he became very anxious. "What can we do?" he kept saying to himself. "We must keep on; we may hit our home or some parts of the shore which we know, and from which we may reach it either walking over land, or by coasting along on skates." His greatest fear was approaching the commencement of the channel or river which communicated with Lake Huron, where, as the stream was rapid, the ice probably was not formed, and their destruction would be nearly inevitable. The dangerous point was to the right of their course; he therefore naturally inclined to the left. "I wish we were there," said Charley at length, in a doleful tone. On they went; the pace became slower and slower; the youngest brother kept very close to Philip. "Really I think we might do better without our skates," observed Charley; but Philip judged rightly that skates would still avail them most. They went on—on—on. Harry declared that they ought to have reached home long before this. Philip thought so likewise, but did not express his fears; it was important to keep up his brothers' spirits. Had there been a strong wind he might have

continued to keep on a straight course; but there was not a breath, and the snow came down from all directions, as Harry observed, "just as if a flock of geese were being plucked overhead." The flakes were almost as big as feathers. In vain Philip looked out for a break in the thick woolly veil. Brave Charley kept up manfully; his legs were getting very tired, though. He said nothing; but he could not help uttering low sighs as he worked on, and wishing that he had a pair of wings to lift up his body. No one could speak except about their hopes or fears.

At last Charley felt that his knees were failing under him. "O, Phil, I must stop," he cried out. Philip took him by the hand and cheered him up. "Hold out a little longer, dear Charley; we must be near the shore," he exclaimed. Charley said he would try, and supported on each hand by his brothers went on. He was again nearly giving in, when Philip cried out, "Land a-head!—land a-head! High land with tall trees close down to the lake. It must be near home."

They pushed on vigorously. In less than a minute they ran up against a rock; the tall

trees changed into low bushes, and the high land into a clump of trees in the middle of a small island. Bitter was their disappointment. A moment's consideration made Philip and Harry certain that it was an island they had visited at the southern end of the lake, and three or four miles distant both from their own and D'Arcy's clearings. On examining the bark of the trees, and the direction in which they bent, they were convinced that they had been making a circle, as they had landed exactly on the opposite side to that which they might have expected. From the time they had been moving on, they had probably made more than one circle; if they started off again, how could they expect to steer a straighter course. It was evidently growing darker, and night would soon come on.

The responsibility resting on Philip's shoulders was very great; not that he felt very uneasy about his brothers and himself, but he was sure that the dear ones at home would be anxious about them. Had he been alone he would have made another attempt to reach home; but Charley could not go further, and Harry would very likely knock up. He

determined to remain on the island during the night, unless the weather should clear up and they should be able to see their way across to the main shore. No time, however, was to be lost to prepare for the night before day-light should altogether depart. Philip was too good a back-woodsman to have left home without his axe and match-box.

"D'Arcy little thought how useful his fish would prove to us," said Philip, as he looked about for the best spot on which to put up a shed. "We shall not starve; for that we should be thankful." "And look here, we may have a plentiful dessert," cried Charley, coming up with his hands full of brilliant scarlet berries of a long oval form. "See, I know that these are good to eat; Sophy was preserving some of them two days ago, and said so." The berries were the high bush cranberries which grow on a shrub about the height of the guelder rose. Charley had soon collected many more than he and his brothers could possibly eat, especially as they had no sugar to eat them with.

"Come, Charley, as you are able to move about, set to work and collect wood, for we

shall have to keep up a blazing fire all night," said Philip, as he began to chop away at some small trees to form the posts of his proposed shed. Harry meantime was getting lighter poles and branches to form a roof. The spot selected by Philip for the hut was in a sheltered nook under some thickly matted cedars which would greatly protect it from the snow. The materials were soon brought together; and so expert had the brothers become in all handywork, that they quickly made it habitable. The roof they covered with birch-bark, picked up under the trees from which it fell, as also the lower part of the sides, banking them up with snow. Boughs of spruce-fir formed no contemptible couches. In a very short time they had built a tolerably comfortable hut. Their fire was the next thing to be attended to. There was plenty of drift-wood just above the ice, and dead boughs sufficient to keep up a blazing fire all night: it was soon lighted. Two of the fish were held before it till they melted sufficiently to allow of being cleaned; Philip then having cut some forked sticks, forced them into the ground not yet frozen far down, and with a slender rod

spitted the fish, which he placed on the forked sticks before the fire. “I wish that we could boil them Indian fashion,” said Harry: “I saw an old squaw perform the operation the other day, and yet she had only a wooden bucket. She got a heap of stones heated, and then putting some cold water into her bucket she dropped in her fish and began filling up the bucket with the hot stones; the water bubbled and hissed, and the fish were soon cooked.”

Their own fish did not take long roasting. They were pronounced excellent, especially seasoned with the cranberries. “I say, this is no bad fun after all,” exclaimed Charley, who soon recovered from his fatigue. “If it wasn’t for those at home I wouldn’t have missed it on any account.”

“I begin to hope that they will not be breaking their hearts about us,” said Harry; “they must have seen the snow-storm coming on, and will think that we remained with D’Arcy.” Philip hoped the same, and enjoyed the adventure nearly as much as his brothers. Supper over and the fire made up, he told them both to lie down while he kept

up the fire and watched for any change in the weather. Still the snow continued to fall—not a break in the dense mass of clouds overhead appeared. Philip sat with his feet close to the fire, and his back resting against the side of the hut. It was necessary to be very watchful, to prevent the flames catching the branches on which his brothers lay. He had partially closed the entrance with boughs, but an aperture was required to let out the smoke, and he also had frequently to go out and get more fuel, and to watch for the snow ceasing. Harry and Charley quickly fell asleep. Philip felt very much inclined to do the same; he tried all sorts of expedients to keep awake. The hut was not high enough or large enough to enable him to walk about. He would have gone out, but the fire absolutely required his attendance; he did get up, and stood on one leg, then on the other, till he got tired, so he sat himself down again and raked and stirred the fire as before. There was no want of warmth in the hut. At last his hand stopped, and all was silent; if he was not asleep he was very nearly so. Suddenly he was aware that there was some-

thing moving in or near the hut. He looked up, and just at the entrance he saw a huge brown monster, his eyes looking curiously in, while with its paws it had abstracted one of the fish which had been hung up to the door-post to keep cool. The stick which Philip had used as a poker was in a flame, so, springing up, he dashed it into the face of the intruder—a big bear—grasping his axe ready for action should the bear retaliate. Bruin gave a loud and angry growl at the unexpected attack, dropping his booty and preparing for action. The noise awoke Harry and Charley, who sprang to their feet. “Dash burning sticks in the fellow’s face, while I tackle him with my axe,” cried Philip. It was fortunate that he was not alone. He gave one cut at Bruin’s paws, but the next instant the monster would have seized the axe and hugged Philip, had not Harry dashed a stick into his eyes, the pain of which made him spring on one side and tumble over on his back. Charley followed up the attack with another fire-brand, and Philip with his axe dealt him a blow on the side of his head which almost stunned him. Another

such blow would have finished the career of Bruin, but as Philip was lifting his weapon Harry cried out, "O dear, dear, the hut is on fire!" Philip, on this, for a moment turned his head, and the bear rolling round got up on his feet, and scrambled away over the snow as fast as he could move. Philip, instead of pursuing him, had to attend to the burning hut; and, what was of still greater importance, to rescue the fish, which would have been not only cooked, but over-cooked before they were wanted. Charley had, however, thoughtfully seized them, so that Philip and Harry could attend to the hut. In vain did they pull out the part which was already blazing, the wood of the larger portion was so dry that it also caught fire, and it was soon evident that they had no chance of saving their mansion. "What a misfortune," cried Harry. "I will not say that," observed Philip. "If the bear had not awoke me we might have been burnt ourselves; besides, it has just struck me, that this blaze, which is larger than we should have ventured to kindle, may be seen by those at home, or by D'Arcy, and it will give them assurance of

our safety. However, let us set to work to repair damages while the flame lasts, for if we once get chilled, it will not be so easy to warm up again."

The fire afforded light enough to enable the three brothers to cut down a fresh supply of poles and boughs, and well accustomed to the sort of work, they soon again had a hut raised of sufficient size to afford them all shelter. The younger brothers were, however, not inclined to sleep, and they intreated Philip to rest, which he promised to do if they would undertake to keep awake. At present there seemed no chance of their getting away. As soon as Philip had lain down, Harry and Charley armed themselves with long burning sticks with which to receive the bear should he return, taking care to hang their fish up inside, out of his way. He was, however, not likely to come back again, after the warm reception he had received.

"I thought bears always shut themselves up in winter, and lived by sucking their paws," observed Charley. "As to sucking their paws, I don't know," said Harry; "but

I fancy that the brown bear of this part of the world shuts himself up for the greater part of the winter, and only occasionally comes out on a mild day to forage for food. I conclude that our friend had his nest somewhere near and was disturbed by the fire, and his olfactories excited by the smell of the broiled fish. I wish that we had caught him, we might have taken home something worth having.” “Do you think that he has left the island?” asked Charley. “Couldn’t we hunt him up?” “Without consulting Philip! and I should not like to awake him,” said Harry. “But, I will tell you what, we will make some spears in the mean time, and harden their points in the fire, and if we can find him we’ll take him, dead or alive.”

There were some tough young saplings growing just outside of sufficient length for the proposed object; three of these were quickly cut, and being pointed were hardened in the fire, and then again scraped, till they became rather formidable weapons. “Don’t you think Phil has slept long enough?” said Charley, who was anxious to make trial of his spear. “I am afraid Master Bruin will

be sneaking off, and leaving us to whistle for him." "Very uncivil not to stop and be killed," said Harry; "but we need be in no hurry; if he didn't go off at first he is safe enough somewhere near here, depend on it."

The snow continued to fall, but it could not have fallen so thickly as at first, or it would have covered the ground with a thicker coat than it appeared to have done. Daylight dawned at last, and Philip woke up. He was amused by the preparations for a combat made by his brothers, for he did not believe that the bear would be found. Before going out all three knelt down and offered up their prayers and thanksgiving for the protection afforded them. Under no circumstances did they ever omit that duty. Philip then advised that they should take some breakfast, that they might be ready for any emergency. Another fish was accordingly cooked, of which Charley, in spite of his eagerness, was ready enough to partake. He was hoping all the time that Bruin would smell the savoury morsel, and would be tempted to return. Probably, however, he had already had quite enough of their com-

pany and mode of proceeding to wish again to encounter them.

It snowed still, but not the dry, hard snow of the previous evening, and Philip felt more than ever anxious on account of the warmth of the weather. Before the sun could have quite risen, rain came, mixed with the snow, and gradually there was more rain and less snow, till the rain came down so fast that they were glad to get into their hut for shelter. They well knew that nothing so rapidly causes ice to become rotten as does rain. They might be prisoners, therefore, till it had sufficiently melted to allow of a boat being pushed through it. “But it cannot be rotten yet,” said Harry. “Let us look out for the shore, and, if we can see it, push across to the nearest point; never mind the rain.” “Agreed.” They crept out of their hut, and worked their way to the shore of the little island. The land round them across the water was very faint; still, as they fancied that they could distinguish their own home, and D’Arcy’s clearing, and the settlement, they determined to try to reach one or the other. The settlement was the nearest, and if they reached

that they might easily find their way home. There was a nominal road, though scarcely passable, except when covered with snow in winter. They were debating whether it would be better to attempt to skate or to walk across the ice. “We can but pull our skates off if we do not make good progress,” said Philip; so they were sitting down to put them on when Charley exclaimed that he must have a look for the bear; if he was there he would find him out. Off he ran with his spear. He had not been absent half a minute when he came running back, crying out, “Here he is, sure enough, in among the roots of an old tree under the bank. Come, Phil; come, Harry, come; we shall have him, sure enough, for he does not seem inclined to move. I suspect the tap you gave him, Phil, with your axe, hurt him more than we fancied.”

The latter remarks were uttered as the three brothers, with their spears ready for action, hurried towards the spot Charley had indicated. There, indeed, was a brown heap, from out of which a set of sharp teeth and a pair of twinkling eyes appeared. “There, what do you think of that?” asked Charley. The

bear lay in a sort of root-formed cavern, under the bank. Some snow had drifted into it, which had been protected from the rain ; on the snow were wide stains of blood. His wound would certainly make the bear more savage, and might not have much weakened him. Still, forgetting the risk they were running, they all three made a rush at him with their spears. He attempted to get up, seizing Charley's spear from his grasp, and biting furiously at it, but Philip's and Harry's pinned him to the bank. Still his strength was great, and it was not till Philip was able to get a blow at his head with his axe that his struggles ceased.

"Hurrah, hurrah ! now we may live here for a week, like Robinson Crusoe," shouted Charley, highly delighted with their success. "And leave those at home to believe that we are lost," said Philip. "No, no, I don't mean that ; only if we were obliged to stop we might contrive to be very jolly," said Charley. They had no little trouble in dragging the bear up the bank, and it then became a question what they should do with him. They could not carry him away, that was very

certain. Cutting him up was not a pleasant operation, yet they could not hang him up whole. “We will secure his tongue, and we must come back for him as soon as we can,” said Phil. They had been so busy that they had not observed that the rain had ceased, and that instead of it a thick fog had sprung up again, completely obscuring the shores. It was so warm that there could be no doubt that the ice must be rapidly melting. Had this happened at the end of winter it would not have signified, as it would have required many days then to weaken the ice materially. Still, if it had not been for the fog they could have pushed across without fear at once.

“Why did we come without a compass?” cried Philip, not for the first time. “Remember, you fellows, never to leave home without one. You do not know when you may require it in this country.” After sitting down on the bank for some time, Philip started up, exclaiming, “They will be breaking their hearts with anxiety about us. I must go. You two have plenty of food, and if you will promise me that you will not stir from the island till a boat comes for you, or

till the weather clears and the ice hardens thoroughly, I will go across to the settlement and send on home overland. I know that I can hit it, as there is a breeze blowing, and I took the bearings before the rain came on. Harry and Charley were very unwilling to let their brother go, but at length, when he had persuaded them that there was no danger to himself, they agreed to obey his wishes.

Having disengaged himself of his axe and an overcoat, as well as of the remainder of D'Arcy's fish, which he left for his brothers, Philip buckled on his skates, and taking one of the spears in his hand, away he glided; his brothers, standing on the shore, watched him—his figure growing less and less distinct, till he disappeared in the thick mist which hung over the lake. "I wish that we had not let him go," cried Charley. "Suppose any accident should happen to him, how dreadful. Couldn't we call him back? He would hear us if we shouted." "No, that would annoy him, as we have no reason for calling him back. We must let him go," said Harry. "Well, at all events, we can pray for him," exclaimed Charley, in

a tone which showed that the thought was consolatory. They did so immediately, and felt far greater confidence than before. For themselves, they had no cause to fear. They had food enough for a month or more, should the frost return, and they had the means of building a hut, in which they could be perfectly sheltered from the weather. They had abundance of fuel, and the bear's skin would keep them warm at night. There were the cranberries, and probably some other berries, and they knew of several roots which they thought they should find. "Really, we are very well off," said Charley, after they had reviewed their resources. "I don't think there is another part of the world where, in a little island like this, we could find such ample means of support. I shouldn't mind spending a month here at all."

"Ah! but we could not expect always to find a bear in such a place as this; and as for the fish, we brought them with us," said Harry, by way of argument. "But I daresay, if we were to hunt about, we should find some racoons; and if the ice melted we should catch plenty of fish—or we might make a

hole in the ice and fish through it," argued Charley. "By the by, I have got some hooks and a line in my pocket; I vote we try."

No sooner was the proposal made than executed; two fishing lines were fitted — with their spears a hole was made in the easily yielding ice — the bear furnished bait. Scarcely was a line in than a tug was felt, and a small fish was hauled up. They did not know the name, but as its appearance was prepossessing, they had no doubt that it was fit for food. Another and another followed; they were delighted with their sport, and even Harry felt that he should be sorry to have to go away. "If we had but some bread and some tea, with a pot to boil it in, we should do capitally," he observed. "We may dig dandelion roots for coffee, we can boil water with hot stones in a wooden jug, which we can make, and there are roots which will serve us for bread," said Charley. "If we could but get a few heads of Indian corn, we might thrive just as we are." "We might live, certainly," said Harry; "but I doubt if we could do more."

CHAPTER VIII.

WE must follow Philip in his perilous adventure. He felt more doubtful as to the strength of the ice than he had expressed; but should it break beneath him, he relied on his long pole to extricate himself. He looked back every now and then, and he appeared to be taking a straight course; he felt the breeze also always on his left cheek. This inspirited him, though he could not see the shore. The snow was yielding enough, though rather clogging about his heels; the fog, however, grew thicker than ever; it was evidently the fog caused by a warm thaw. He had seen many such in England. He pushed on boldly —faster than he had gone with his brothers —he was lightly clad and carried no weight. Did he hear sounds coming from the shore—sleigh-bells — or sheep-bells — men's voices also? If so, he was probably near the settlement. He was trying to pierce the mist, when suddenly he felt his feet sinking from

under him, and before he could spring back, he was sent gliding down a slab of ice, and plunged in the water. For several yards before him there was nothing but water. Holding his pole he swam on. He reached the edge of the ice : it broke as he clutched it. It is a difficult operation to get out of water on to a slab of ice. He found it so. If he got one end of the pole on the ice the other slipped off. He saw the danger of exhausting his strength by useless struggles. He had heard voices. He might make himself heard, so he shouted—“Help! help! the ice has broken in—help!”

It was a sad fate which seemed about to overwhelm him. Life had many charms in spite of the one disappointment, which had rather given a gravity to his manner than in any way embittered his existence. He had hoped to do something in the world — his duty, at all events. He had many too depending on him. How would they bear his loss? He looked upward. A thick veil hung over his head. Below was the dark water — on every side the wide expanse of treacherous ice and snow. His limbs were getting chilled;

still he would struggle on while consciousness was allowed him. Had the hole been smaller into which he had fallen, he might have got his pole across it. It was, however, of much assistance, as holding on to it, he could rest without breaking the edge of the ice. He was certain that he heard sleigh-bells. He shouted louder than before. The bells ceased. He instantly shouted again. A voice replied, "We'll be with you directly, friend." His heart leaped within him. The voices sounded louder. He discerned objects dimly moving over the ice, here and there. They must be looking for him. He shouted again. They resolved themselves into the forms of two men. They approached him. One had a rope in his hand. "Lay hold of this, we'll soon have you out," said the man. Philip passed the rope round his pole, and then grasped it tightly. With care he was dragged out. The other person stood at a distance. "We must not put more weight than we can help on this treacherous stuff," he said. "Why, I do believe that you are young Ashton."

"The same: and you Mr. Norman," cried

Philip. "I am indeed thankful for your timely aid."

"Which my man rendered, and not I; and which he would have rendered to a drowning dog, so don't say anything about that," replied Mr. Norman. "But we must not stop talking here. The sooner we are on *terra firma*, and you in a warm bed, the better."

Philip found, on reaching the shore, that he was fully half a mile north of the settlement. Mr. Norman, who was on his way to pay his family a visit, was passing in his sleigh at the moment. "I hoped that the snow would remain long enough to enable me to get up to you, for your road scarcely allows of a wheeled conveyance," he observed, as they drove rapidly back to the settlement, Philip sitting covered up with furs at the bottom of the sleigh. A warm bed was, however, not a luxury to be found at the settlement; indeed, Philip assured his friend, that if he could obtain a change of clothes, he would much rather set off at once to rescue his brothers. "Not till you are more fit to go than at present," said Mr. Norman. "My friend Job Judson, at the hotel, will help us;

and while you are drying outwardly, and warming inwardly, we will get a boat or canoe of some sort to shove over across the ice to bring away the youngsters. They are happy enough in the meantime, depend on that; I have had many such an adventure in my younger days, greatly to my enjoyment."

In a few minutes Philip was sitting wrapped up in a sheet and blanket before the almost red-hot stove of the log-hut, ycleped an hotel, while Mr. Job Judson was administering a stiffer tumbler of rum-and-water than Philip had ever before tasted, probably, though it appeared to him no stronger than weak negus. Believing this to be the case he did not decline a second, the effect of which was to throw him into a glow and to send him fast asleep. Meantime his clothes, hung up round the stove, were drying rapidly; and when the landlord at last aroused him to put them on, he found that they were, as he said, as warm as a toast; indeed they were, he had reason to suspect, rather overdone. He found Mr. Norman with a large dug-out canoe on runners, with a couple of poles, one on each side, and two men who had volunteered to accompany him.

"I'd go myself, but I guess I'd rather over-ballast your craft," said Job Judson, turning round his rotund figure, such as was not often seen in the bush. Philip thanked him, and agreed that no more persons were required for the expedition. Mr. Norman insisted on going. "Do not be afraid of my being tired," he remarked; "I have always lived in so hardy a way that nothing tires me."

Philip was not aware that more than three hours had passed since he reached the settlement. The fog was still as thick as ever. The two men dragged on the canoe; Mr. Norman pushed astern, and placing a compass down on the seat before him, observed, "It is necessary to take our departure very carefully, or we shall find it more difficult to hit the island than you did on leaving it to reach the shore. I do not suppose that there is a person in the settlement can give us the bearings of the island from this." "No; but the map of the Geological Survey will," said the gentleman who kept the store in the settlement. In another instant he brought out a large map, where the island was clearly laid down. "All right, thank you," said Mr. Norman:

"away we go." The two men laid hold of the fore-end of the poles ; Philip and Mr. Norman behind. The ice was far from secure ; it did not crack nor bend, but it evidently rested on the water, and such ice generally gives way without any warning or sound. The party, however, pushed dauntlessly on, steadily, but not so fast as Philip would have liked. He thought, indeed, at last, that they must have passed the island ; but Mr. Norman was too good a navigator for that—it rose up suddenly before them.

Philip shouted, "Harry—Charley—all right, boys — hurrah!" but there was no answer. Again he cried out ; no one replied. "They are hiding to try to frighten me, Mr. Norman," he said, laughing, — "the rogues." The party landed and looked about. "O very well, they cannot be here, and so we'll go away," he cried out, thinking that would make them appear ; it had no such effect. Philip began to grow anxious : they would certainly not carry their joke so far. He went round the island, sometimes on the ice and sometimes on shore. As he was hurrying on, what was his dismay to see a large hole in

the ice : his poor young brothers had met the fate which he had so narrowly escaped. He saw exactly how it had happened ; one had gone through, and the other in trying to help him out had fallen in likewise. There had been a struggle, as there were prints of feet and knees in the snow round it ; some the water had washed over.

His exclamations of grief brought his companions to the spot. "Not so certain that anything dreadful has occurred," said Mr. Norman. " You told me you had killed a bear : now Bruin has been deprived of his hinder legs, which make the best hams ; and his four paws, which turn into good soup ; and I don't think that they would have walked off by themselves. Come, let us examine your hut. Ah ! the skin too has disappeared." "Yes, and I see that the remainder of the fish which D'Arcy gave us are not here," said Philip, somewhat relieved. "But perhaps the island has been visited by some trapper, who would naturally carry off the most valuable parts of the bear." "Ah ! but look here : if the island has been visited by a trapper, he came with a vehicle on runners



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from the direction of your clearing, and returned to the same place. There are tho marks clear enough still; an Indian would have told us exactly how things occurred."

"I wish that we had had one," said Philip, in whom fatigue had produced low spirits.

"The visitor, whoever he was, not finding them, may have carried off the bear's flesh and returned without them."

"I think that I can convince you that my conjectures are correct," said Mr. Norman, after looking about for some time longer. "You killed the bear with long stakes: I can find none; they would naturally have carried them off as trophies. They had skates; none are to be seen, the foot-prints are those of shoes."

"How came the hole?" asked Philip. "They made it themselves to fish through. See here are some scales which Tom Smith has just brought me, and which his sharp eye detected near the hole: the fish was evidently thrown down there on being unhooked. Come, I doubt if any Indian would read marks more clearly than I have done, though probably he would explain matters in a far more pompous style. The fact is, my experience of bush life

and Indian life has been very considerable, as you will understand if you like some day to listen to some of my adventures. But there is nothing to keep us longer here."

Philip was happier, but not thoroughly satisfied. The party set out on their return. "This ice would not have borne us many hours hence; be ready for a leap into the canoe," said Mr. Norman. They reached the settlement, however, in safety. The inhabitants were divided in opinion as to whether the young Ashtons were lost or not; Philip was eager to reach home to settle the point. Mr. Norman had sent for wheels for his vehicle, as the snow had melted too much to allow of runners. It was soon mounted, and away they rattled, bumped and thumped, Mr. Norman singing—

"' You and I, Billy, have often heard how folks are ruined
and undone,

By overturns in carriages, by fires and thieves in London.'

"You see, my young friend, we must look out for haps and mishaps in the country as well as in town, on shore as well as at sea. Ignorant of religion as seamen are, they have a right feeling of a superintending Providence,

which makes them feel as secure in the midst of the raging storm as they would driving about in the crowded city. The true believer in Christ is ready to die at any moment. This it is makes weak women courageous, while strong men show themselves to be cowards when instant death threatens them."

Philip thought to himself, "How did I behave and feel when I was in the water this morning?—how when I found the hole in the ice, and thought that my brothers had fallen through?" The journey to the clearing, which across the ice would not have occupied twenty minutes, and not an hour by land had the snow been hard, took up more than two hours, with the risk of an overturn or break-down every yard, and such jolting as only well-knit limbs would endure.

At last the log-house appeared before them. "A very creditable edifice; really, Mr. Philip, you were born a backwoodsman," exclaimed Mr. Norman. "I learned carpentering, and the principal rules for house-building, while my hands and eyes have been kept in exercise from my childhood," was the answer. "That is the preparation required for all settlers in

the bush, and which so large a number want and fail of success in consequence—or at all events waste precious years in gaining at a heavy cost the knowledge with which they ought to begin. I commenced the world without a sixpence, and have worked my way up to wealth and independence by the proper use of my hands and head. A settler, to rise, must have both. We welcome hands in the province. The possessor of a head benefits himself chiefly—not that we could get on without heads either."

As they drove up to the door, D'Arcy was the first person to meet them. Philip's heart sunk within him in spite of what Mr. Norman had been saying. He hoped to have seen his brothers. "Where are the lads?" he exclaimed, eagerly. "All right, come in. I will take your horse round, Mr. Norman," said D'Arcy; and as the door opened, the boys' voices were heard from their room. The rest of the family quickly came to the entrance to welcome them; and D'Arcy, coming back, explained what had occurred. He had seen the blaze of their burning hut, but not suspecting the cause, had gone across the lake with his canoe on

runners, to ascertain if they had got home safe, not sorry for a good excuse for his visit. His appearance naturally caused great dismay and anxiety. He, however, afforded his friends some comfort, by assuring them that he believed the missing ones would be found on the island, towards which, supplied with a compass, he immediately set out, accompanied by Peter, and carrying provisions, cordials, and blankets. His satisfaction was considerable when laughing voices proceeded from the direction of the island, and he found the young gentlemen amusing themselves greatly by fishing for tommicods. Taking the best parts of the bear, he hurried back with his rescued friends to prevent Philip, should he arrive first, from setting off to meet them.

Philip's long delay had again caused his family great anxiety. A happy party, with grateful hearts, assembled round Mr. Ashton's supper-table that evening—a table framed by his own hands, while most of the luxuries were supplied by the industry of those sitting round it. In another year there would not be an article of food on it which had not been produced on the farm, or procured from the

lake, or surrounding woods. Not the least happy was Lawrence D'Arcy; and perhaps a glance at Miss Ashton's countenance might have told the reason why.

"Well, Mr. Norman, I am glad at length to see you here; and I can assure you, that your prognostications as to my liking the country, have been more than fulfilled," said Mr. Ashton. "I have never for an instant regretted coming out here; and I believe that I am happier, and that my wife and children are so, than we should have been had we lived on the life we had been proposing for ourselves in London, when I found myself deprived of the property which I thought my own."

"God's merciful Providence overruled your plan for your own and your children's good," said Mr. Norman. "I know nothing practically of large cities, and little enough of towns; but from what I have read, I suspect that the temptations to evil in them are great, and the advantages comparatively small, when the chief object of man's life is considered. No life can more conduce to virtue and a healthful state of body and mind than that

which the industrious settler in the country leads out here. He has hard work and rough living, may be; but what is that, whether he be gentle or simple, compared to what he would have had to endure, had he without fortune remained idle at home? That is the question all settlers must ask themselves over and over again, whenever they get out of sorts with the Province."

CHAPTER IX.

“It is the fashion to say in England, so I hear, that Canada is not the country in which people can make fortunes,” said the sheriff; for such was the office Mr. Norman held in his county. “I grant that it is not the country in which fortunes will come of themselves; but, putting the lower province out of the question, I should like to know how the owners of the nice estates and pretty villas scattered so thickly throughout the upper province became possessed of them. How has Toronto sprung up into a first-rate city? How have Hamilton, London, and twenty other towns risen in a few years into importance? How is it that thousands of comfortable farms are found in all directions? Look at our canals—at the thousands of vessels which navigate our lakes and rivers; at our saw-mills, and grist-mills, and manufactories of all sorts; at the tens of thousands of acres of corn land; at our pastures; at our oxen and

kine; at our flocks of sheep; at our horses; at our public and private buildings; at our churches; our colleges; our schools; our hospitals; our prisons; at all the conveniences of a highly civilized community which we possess, and then let me ask to whom do all these things belong? To the inhabitants of the province. Who are they? Men mostly who began life in it; some few whose fathers lived in it; but very few indeed whose grandfathers were born here. Of these, the capital of the greater number, when they began this career, might have been counted by shillings; —did I say shillings? I would rather say strong hearts and hands, without coin at all; some few might have reckoned by pounds, fewer by hundreds, and very few indeed, if any, by thousands. Then how did they become possessed of all this wealth? Why they made all this wealth, they created all these advantages, by their labour, their intelligence, and perseverance. They are theirs —to enjoy—to benefit by. It is said in England, ‘We do not find rich Canadians come back and settle at home, as so many Australians do.’ Granted; Canada, I say,

is essentially the country to reside in. People who have made fortunes here do not go away, for the best of reasons; because here they have all the requirements of civilization, all the advantages which the Australians go to England to obtain. I say too that numbers do make very handsome fortunes—though I grant, as I before observed, that fortunes don't come of themselves; but, which is better, no one who is persevering, industrious, and intelligent, fails to become independent, and to start his children well in the world. I don't want to disparage other provinces, but I say that we Canadians can and do make fortunes; and what is more, we have the means of enjoying them thoroughly, without going to other lands to do so."

The sheriff had got on a subject on which he always grew eager, though he was at length obliged to pause for want of breath. "Take myself, for example," he continued; "I rose, if you like, from the bottom of the tree; and I know fifty—I may say a hundred men, who have got up as I have done—my brother-sheriff of the next county among them. My father came over from England. He was a

baker by trade; but though he knew how to make loaves, he did not know how to read. He came to the neighbourhood of Kingston first, and worked as a journeyman. When he had saved a little money he set up for himself; then he got a share in a flour-mill, and bought a little land;—then a little more; and then the flour-mill became his; and lastly, he sold the whole at a considerable profit, and moving westward, pitched his tent at Pentanquishine, on Lake Huron. He invested largely in land; and troops being stationed there during the war with the States, and it becoming a naval station, he realized a considerable profit. Though uneducated himself, he was desirous of giving his sons a good education; so he sent us all to the best school in the province—I might say the only one—kept by the Rev. Dr. Strachan, now Bishop of Toronto, in that big city, then known as “Muddy Little York.” The excellent doctor, of whom we all stood in reverential awe, had the art of imparting knowledge; and I believe I, with others, benefited much by it. Of my two elder brothers I will say nothing, except that they tyrannized over me

and another brother younger than I was. He and I were fast friends, and made common cause against them. As Pentanquishine could not supply us with clothing fit to appear in at Toronto, our father directed us to get it at that place, and entrusted our elder brother with money to pay for it. He got clothing certainly, and paid the tailor, but it was for himself and not for us, and we were allowed to go on wearing our shabby clothes. I protested vehemently against this iniquitous proceeding, but Arthur, my younger brother, who was of a more gentle nature, yielded quietly and said nothing.

“There was to be a public examination, at which all the big-wigs in the place were to attend; and I told my brother that if he would not order us both proper suits of clothes I would run away to our father and complain. He laughed at me, not believing that I would make the attempt. I was as good as my word, for pretending I was ill one evening, I got leave to go up early to bed. Instead of going to sleep I watched my opportunity, slipped out of the house with all the money Arthur and I could collect, or rather save, in

my pocket, and running on all night, before morning I was far away towards Lake Simcoe. You see, boys brought up in the bush, as I was, have no fear of being out alone, and can find their way in any direction they have a mind to follow. Besides which, it was a beaten cart track I followed, mostly in the line the railway now takes. Great changes since then! I might have been caught even then, for I was pursued for some distance; but I was overtaken by an old acquaintance—a carter, or rather a packer or carrier—Jack Johnson by name, to whom I narrated what had occurred. My elder brother had on some occasion offended him, and this made him, probably, more ready to take my part, and to render me assistance. ‘Jump into the waggon, lad, and hide thee away, and if any one comes after thee I’ll show him that Jack Johnson’s waggon is just as much his castle as any man’s house is, and if he pries therein he must take the consequences.’ What those consequences would be he did not say, but he flourished his heavy whip with a ferocity which made it probable that the head of anybody who interfered would be broken. With this

consoling reflection I fell asleep, for I was very tired after my long run during all the night. I knew, also, that Jack would be as good as his word, so I had no fears to keep me awake.

“We jogged on all day, stopping only to bait and water the cattle. Now and then I awoke and looked out ; it was the same scene—forest on either side, with now and then a small lake, or pond, or creek. Jack was at his horses’ heads, whistling away, as if he had nothing in the world to care for. He hadn’t either. He had been a workhouse-boy in the old country, and would have ended his days as a labourer, and now he was laying by a good bit of money every trip, and expected to be able to buy a comfortable farm before long. So he did, and has brought up a numerous family, all well-to-do in the world, and lives himself as comfortably as any man with four or five hundred a-year would, I guess, in England. At night we stopped at a log hut, the only inn on the road, and Jack brought me some food and told me to be quiet, and that we would be off early in the morning.

“The second day passed much as did the first, except that I had lost all fear of being

overtaken. The confession is somewhat humbling, but the truth is, I was not considered worth sending after. ‘Let the chiel gang,—wie sae little brains in his head he’s sure to fall on his feet,’ observed the doctor, when informed of my flight—so I was told. In the evening of the second day we reached Holland’s Landing, at the south end of Lake Simcoe. Settlers had begun to take up the land on either side of the lake: they were chiefly naval and military officers, forced into idleness at the end of the war, without any previous training for the life they were to lead, or knowledge of what would be required of them as settlers. The naval men did the best, and many of them succeeded, as did a few of the military men, but the greater number, after a few years’ trial, I might say months, left in disgust, or ruined. Many never came even to occupy their grants. Jack’s business was to supply these gentlemen with goods, which most of them came to fetch at Holland’s Landing.

“As he was going no further, I had now to consider how I was to perform the rest of my journey West. While standing in the bar of

the store with Jack, who should come in but a trapper, known to him, Jean Baptiste by name, to make some purchases. ‘Whither bound, friend Baptiste?’ asked Jack. I could make out clearly enough the meaning of his reply, but I cannot repeat the extraordinary mixture of Canadian, French, English, and Ojibbeway, in which it was couched. He intimated that he was going a few days’ journey west, over ground where there was then an abundance of beaver, martin, mink, and other fur-bearing animals, which are rare enough now. Jean Baptiste showed his Indian origin by his long, Jewish-like countenance, dark eyes, and raven black hair. He was dressed in skins, the hair being inside, in spite of the heat, his leggings and vest ornamented with bead-work and gaily-dyed porcupine quills, and mingled with coloured fibres and worsted.

“I slept in Jack’s cart, and just at day-break Baptiste came and roused me up. I thanked Jack heartily for his kindness, and with a stout stick in my hand, with which he presented me, set off to follow my strange-looking guide towards his camp. Here, under

a lean-to of birch-bark, I found Mrs. Baptiste, an Indian squaw, who, if not a solace to him in his hours of trial, took a great deal of trouble off his shoulders, for she worked for him from morning till night like a slave, with small thanks. In the way he treated his wife he was no better than an Indian. She had her hand-sleigh already packed, and as soon as we appeared she harnessed herself into it and began dragging it off without saying a word. Talk of the romance of Indian life, there is none of it of an elevated nature. All the stuff novelists have written is sheer downright nonsense. It is simple brutality from beginning to end. I speak of the natives I have met with before they became Christians. Baptiste, on the strength of his being a French-Canadian, on his father's side, called himself a Christian, but he was as ignorant of religion as was his squaw; and here let me remind you, whenever you write to your friends in England, tell them that there is a grand opening for missionary labours among the wide-scattered Indian tribes still existing on this continent. Something is being done, but much more may be done; and not only is

there work to be done among Indians, but among the out-settlers, and especially among the lumberers on the Ottawa. Never mind whether they are Romanists or not. They never hear the Gospel of free grace preached from one end of the year to the other. I believe that a missionary going among them would find abundant fruit as the result of his labours.

"To return to Baptiste. He had set his traps in the forest along the route we were to take, and so we had to push our way through it, sleigh and all, he scarcely condescending to help his squaw when it stuck between the stumps of the trees, she also looking with supreme contempt on me when I attempted to help her; indeed she, I fancy, considered me rather officious than otherwise. I travelled on for several days with this unattractive couple, and yet I believe that they were really fond of each other. They were hospitable in their way also, for their pot was always well supplied with meat, and they gave me as much as I could eat. It was not of the choicest kind, I must confess, for every creature the trapper caught went into it, with a mixture of

herbs and roots, among which garlic predominated.

"At last Baptiste told me that he had come to the end of his journey, and that I must find the rest of the way by myself. 'I will try, of course, but it strikes me that I shall not succeed,' was my answer. 'If I had a gun and powder and shot, or even your traps, I would get on fast enough as soon as I could find my way into the blazed road, but out here the thing is impossible. If you will not come along with me I must go back with you.'

"He signified that he would be glad enough to have my company, but that he had promised Jack to see me on my way, and that his honour was concerned in doing so. He could not go on himself, but he would find some Indians who would guide me if I could pay them. I had three dollars in my pocket, I told him. He said half that sum would content them if I would pay it them. He soon found the trail of some Indians whom he knew to be his friends—we came up with them. The bargain was struck with two of them to see me safe all the way, and

Baptiste told me that they were highly delighted though they took care not to show it. They were accompanied by their squaws ; indeed, an Englishman of fortune would as soon think of travelling without his valet as an Indian without his squaw to perform every menial occupation he may require. There was nothing romantic in the appearance of my friends ; one wore an old shooting-coat, which he had trimmed with coloured worsted, while the other had fastened a blue checked shirt over his other garments by way of ornament ; the rest of their costume being more in the old Indian fashion of leather and fur. They were dirty in the extreme, and not over good looking ; but they had honest countenances, and I had no fear of their not treating me fairly. One of them went before me to clear the way, the other followed at my heels to pick me up should I stumble, and the squaws brought up the rear, all in single file. The squaws had to build the wigwams—or, rather, lean-tos—when we camped, to collect sticks for the fire, to cook the food, and to bring water from the nearest stream or pond ; their masters condescended

to catch the game. They were not such expert trappers as Baptiste, but then they ate creatures which he would have rejected—nothing that could be masticated came amiss to them. I should have fared badly, but the second day, just after we had camped, we came suddenly upon two bears with two young cubs. They were as much surprised at seeing us as we were at encountering them. One of the Indians who had a fowling piece fired, and hit Mr. Bruin in the brain, whereon Mrs. Bruin trotted off with one of the cubs; while the other Indian with his bow shot the cub which had remained with his father.

"I was eager to exhibit my prowess, so followed the retreating bears, hoping to kill the cub with my stick. Fortunately they took the way near the camp, when the squaws, seeing me, ran out and caught hold of me, telling me that as surely as I had killed the cub the mother would have turned round and torn me to pieces. Though I still wished to go, they held me tight till the bears were out of sight. I believe fully that they saved my life, and certainly it was pleasanter

supping on a bear than making a supper for one.

"At last we reached Pentanquishine, and so thankful was I to get there that I gave the honest Indians two dollars instead of one and a-half. I fear that they spent the greater part, if not the whole of the sum, at the grog shop before they left the settlement.

"'What! who are you, you little rag-muffin?' exclaimed my father when he saw me, for by that time so torn had become my garments by the thorny shrubs, that they literally were in shreds. 'You are no child of mine; get out with you, you little ill-conditioned cub.' I ought not to have been surprised at this greeting, though it was not pleasant to my feelings.

"I had considerable difficulty in persuading him who I was, and of the truth of my statement as to the cause of my leaving. At last he did believe me, and declared that he would break Dick's head and stop his allowance for the following half. Dick, when he came home for the holidays, made me beg him off, not the getting his head broke, for that he laughed at, but the having his allow-

ance stopped, which he guessed might be done.

"When I went back at the commencement of the next half, the Doctor took no notice of what had occurred, and from having been the most ragged, I became one of the best dressed boys in the school. This was not always to last. My elder brothers went home to begin life, leaving me and Arthur. We were very glad when they went, for they bullied us terribly. A year passed, and then came a letter with a black seal, and we heard that our father was dead. Dick, who had come of age, inherited his property, and it seemed had the power of doing with us just what he liked. It arose thus: our poor father had been seized with the desire of having his eldest son a gentleman of fortune, and thinking that by leaving him all his property he could do so, he beggared the rest of us. Dick wrote us word that we must earn our own living, but that he would be a brother to us, and to show his affection he apprenticed me to a chair-maker, and my slight, delicate young brother Arthur to a blacksmith.

"Mine was not a bad trade, for furniture was in great demand. 'If that is to be my calling I will go at it,' said I to myself. I did so, and soon could turn a chair very neatly out of hand. Arthur could make no hand at the blacksmith work—his arm had not strength to wield a hammer; I went to his master and asked him to let him off. 'No, I never does anything without an equivalent,' was his answer; 'but I'll tell you what, youngster, I happen to want some chairs for my woman and children to sit on; now, if you'll make them for me, slick off hand, your brother shall go free, I guess.' The bargain was struck. I was anxious to get poor Arthur free, for every day was killing him with labour for which he was so unfit. I set to work at once, and each moment that I could spare from my proper duties to my master I employed in making the chairs. I was determined that he should not say that they were not good chairs—strong and handsome. The blacksmith was highly pleased with them, and instantly freed my brother and made me a present of a couple of dollars.

"With this sum and a little more I had

made by working out of hours, I set Arthur to trade on his own account, to keep him till my term was out, which was to be very shortly. From the day I had left school I had not neglected my studies, and I used to read all the books I could lay hands on during every spare moment. Life is short enough as it is, and people make it still shorter by idling away their time. I knew that I had plenty of work to do, and I found out early that to get it done I must not lose a moment. I consequently not only kept up the knowledge I obtained at school, but got a fair amount besides.

"We worked on for three years, I making chairs and Arthur selling them, saving money, but not very fast. I had no fancy to go on chair-making all my days, and I wished for a more active life.

"I had paid a visit to Holland's Landing a few months before this, and I found that my friend, Jack Johnson, was still driving a thriving trade with the settlement along the shores of the lake; but he had not a good head for business, and I saw that a great deal more might be made of it than he made. A steamer was building to run on the lake. She

was to commence running in a few days. I applied for the office of purser, or steward—call it which you will. I obtained it, at a low salary, stipulating that I should be allowed to trade, to a certain extent, on my own account. That was all I wanted. My plans were at once formed. Jack was to purchase and bring up the articles from Toronto, and Arthur and I to go round to the farms, as far as we could reach, and to obtain orders, large or small. All were fish which came into our net, from an ounce of tobacco to the furniture of a house or the machinery for a saw mill, provided we could get security; it would have been folly to trade without that, especially with some of our customers.

"We paid considerable sums to the steamer for freight, and, pleasing the owners, were able, with their aid, to increase our credit and our business. It is extraordinary how reckless some of those we dealt with were in giving orders for goods and in mortgaging their property as security, without a prospect, as far as we could judge, of their being able to pay us without allowing the mortgage to be foreclosed. That you may not think ill of

me on that account, I may say that we thus had an opportunity of being of considerable service to many of these improvident gentlemen. Our trade throve, and I soon found that it would be convenient to establish a store at the principal place at which the steamer called. Arthur took charge of it, and the flourishing condition of the concern showed that we were right in our expectations.

"Our capital increased. We were compelled to foreclose some mortgages; and as we did not wish to keep the farms of which we thus became possessed, we sold them at more or less profit. We were in the way of hearing when land was to be sold at a cheap rate, either improved or unimproved, and by purchasing such land and re-selling to newly-arrived settlers, who became good customers, we profited considerably. We got the best of everything, and our desire was to supply those who bought of us with what we knew they would most require, and which would give them satisfaction.

"As soon as I had established a business I left the steam-boat and went to live on shore, at the store, having first taken to wife the

daughter of my old master. A very good wife she has made me, and I should like, some day, to bring her over to see you, Mrs. Ashton; but you mustn't expect to see a fine lady, such are not the good wives of this province. For many years she was a hard-working housewife, when helps were beings not to be procured for love or money. The station of life which I then occupied was different to what I now fill, but my good wife has had no ambition to change her style of dress or living with our change of circumstances, from the feeling that she might appear out of place. In fact, my dear madam, you will understand that she is not vulgar, and is essentially free from all vulgar ambition. Here I must bring the sketch of my early life to a conclusion, remarking that what my brother and I did, hundreds of others have done in this province, and thousands more will do if they will practise self-control, labour industriously in whatever station they are placed, and be ready to step into any opening which may present itself, always doing their duty, and praying for strength and guidance from above."

CHAPTER X.

ALTHOUGH the Canadian winter impedes agricultural operations, there is plenty of work to be done both out-of-doors and in-doors, especially on a newly-cleared farm. Chopping down the trees goes on, and if the brushwood has been collected before the snow falls, the huge trunks can be dragged together and piled in heaps to be burnt off. It may seem a sad waste of good timber, but it is the least expensive way of getting rid of what cumbers the ground ; besides which, the ashes very much assist to fertilize it. The Ashtons, however, found that they could dispose of theirs at the newly-erected saw-mills, if they could get the logs there. Not a tree could be moved, however, by any force they could command, till the snow fell and hardened. The logs then were dragged down over it on to the ice, where they were easily formed into a raft and floated across the lake to the mills at the breaking up of the ice in spring.

The first fall of snow had entirely disappeared, and the lake had become free of ice, to be covered again, however, by a far thicker coat than before, and equally smooth. Harry and Charley were eager to have an ice-boat, and they persuaded Philip, in spite of his many avocations, to assist them in making one. The great point was to have good runners. These should have been made of iron, but as that was not to be procured, they got some hard wood of sufficient length, which being slightly curved up at the ends, served admirably. The boat had, therefore, what Harry called two keels. This was the most important part;—the boat was simply a long box with seats across it. The rudder, which was an oar fixed in the stern, had a sharp iron blade which would dig into the ice. The craft was rigged as a schooner, and had a very creditable appearance. A long pole with an iron head helped to steer her and to put her about.

With eager haste she was launched on the glass-like expanse. “Let us stand across to D’Arcy and astonish him,” cried Harry. “We can carry him the invitation to spend Christmas-day with us.” There were no dis-

sentient voices. Philip took the helm, Harry managed the head-sails, Charley the main. The wind was on the quarter. The sails could not be hoisted till they were ready to start, as the ice offering no resistance, she would either have blown over, or run away before the wind. Philip was not quite so sanguine of success as his brothers. The word was given — Harry shoved round the head of the strange-looking craft, and far enough off to allow the rudder full play. The sails were hoisted — the sheets hauled aft — a fresh breeze filled them, and to the delight of her architects, away she shot in splendid style. She answered her helm admirably. It seemed but a few minutes before D'Arcy's clearing hove in sight. Philip fired off his gun to draw his friend's attention to them, and they had only time to haul down their sails before, with the impetus the craft had attained, she glided up to the landing-place, and sent them all tumbling forward, as she made a bold attempt to run up the bank, only prevented by Harry with his iron-shod pole.

D'Arcy required no great pressing to em-

bark with them. They all looked, they declared, like veritable Arctic voyagers, with their fur caps, flaps over their ears, and bear-skin and buffalo-skin coats, kept in by sashes or belts. The settlement was first to be visited. Such a craft as theirs had never been seen there, and created no little interest; though on Lake Ontario, before Toronto, ice-boats of a more elegant construction are constantly used when the ice will allow of it before the snow falls.

The store was visited, and commissions, the list of which filled two columns of Philip's note-book, were executed, and then, with a considerable addition to their lading, they once more got under way. They had now to beat back; but the boat lay closer to the wind than if she had been in water, and though she made some lee-way, they beat back in a wonderfully short space of time. They were so delighted with their sail that they could scarcely keep out of their boat. The whole circuit of the lake was visited, and they talked of taking her into Lake Huron, when, perhaps fortunately, down came such a fall of snow as to make rapid progress over the ice impossible,

and they once again returned to their more serious occupations.

The snow became every day harder, till a crust formed on the top of it, which made walking over it where it was not beaten down, both difficult and painful. Some Indians had encamped in the neighbourhood for the purpose of trading with the pale faces, and obtaining food and clothing. Two of them at this juncture came with some slight oblong frames, between three and four feet in length, with net-work filling up the inner portion. What they could be, none of the younger members of the family could guess, till the Indians fastened one to each of their feet and began to move along over the snow on the lake. "Snow shoes! snow shoes!" cried Charley; and forthwith a bargain was struck for several pair. The squaws brought some the next day of a lighter construction for the ladies of the family, and a new source of amusement was found enabling them also to take the exercise so necessary for health. Bravely Sophy and her sisters faced the cold, bitter and biting as it was, and with their brothers made their first attempt to walk in snow-shoes on the lake.

They were all thus engaged, laughing and shouting and enjoying the amusement, when an object was seen in the distance approaching them, and the silvery cheerful sound of sleigh-bells floated up to them through the calm air. “Bravo—excellent!—that is what I like to see. We should hear nothing of sick headaches in Canada, if all the young ladies would put their pretty little feet on to snow shoes, and step over the country as you are doing, or rather will be doing before long, for you are on the ice just now,” cried Mr. Norman from a handsome sleigh which drove up to them. The horses’ harness, surmounted by a belfry, as Harry called the frame to which the bells were suspended, was covered with bright-coloured braiding, and rich skins filled the sleigh itself and hung over the back. From among them a lady’s head was seen. “Allow me to introduce my wife,” continued Mr. Norman. “She has just told me that she has already fallen in love with you all; but do not let us bring you in—we will wait for you at the house.”

Sophy, however, soon began to find that she had had snow shoeing enough for one

day, and the rest of the party discovered, when they took the shoes off, that their insteps ached more than they had ever before done. Still they were all ready to try again the next day. Mrs. Norman proved to be exactly the sort of person her husband had described her; though homely, she was entirely free from vulgarity, and as she had lived all her life in Canada, she possessed and was glad to impart a large amount of information most valuable to Mrs. Ashton and Sophy. She promised to remain a week with them, to give them instruction in numerous departments of domestic management of which they were ignorant. "It's a pleasure, ma'am, to tell you these things," she remarked to Mrs. Ashton; "you take them in so kindly, and don't seem to fancy that your own ways are better, and that you know more than the person teaching you, as some people do."

The winter passed by pleasantly and usefully. There were some days when even the most hardy of the party had no inclination to go out; this was when there was a strong northerly wind and an intense frost, and the

finer particles of snow were carried through the air and struck the face like so many Liliputian arrows discharged by an army from that far-famed land of Liliput. There was, however, abundance of work to be done in the house, and plenty of hard exercise in sawing up logs for the stove fires. These, while the severer frost lasted, were never allowed to go out, and no one had reason to complain of the want of warmth inside the house; indeed, the walls were so thick, that they retained the heat in the way an ordinary brick or plank building could not have done. Old and young declared, that in spite of cold and snow, they had never spent a happier or pleasanter winter. Probably the happiness of the elders arose from seeing their children contented and well employed around them. There was one absent—Leonard, the midshipman. They almost wished that he would give up the sea, and come and live with them. Mr. Ashton had not even suggested that he should do so, though his necessary allowance took away a large portion of the slender income on which the family had mainly to depend. His parents were amply



See page 138.

rewarded by hearing of the high character he was gaining for himself. D'Arcy was a frequent visitor; he would have been more frequent, but duty kept him labouring at home. Occasionally Philip went over to help him in return for the assistance he gave them.

The winter passed away so rapidly that they could scarcely believe that spring had really come. The snow melted, the green grass appeared, the leaves burst forth, the flowers bloomed and gave their fragrance to the air, the birds warbled forth their notes of joy, and all nature seemed alive and busy. If time passed quickly during the months of winter, it flew by still more rapidly now when there was so much to do that every moment of the twenty-four hours was fully occupied, a very small portion only being devoted to sleep; but then, as Harry declared, they all slept very fast, so that they really got as much as they required. They were all up at dawn of day, and but a short time was allowed for meals till they assembled round the supper table by the light of their home-made candles, the most social and pleasant meal in the day, when the hard work was over and any light

in-door occupation could be engaged in. Even then there was no light or frivolous conversation; constant steady work had sobered their minds, and they had no taste for what was not real and earnest. Generally Mr. Ashton or Philip read some interesting book, the subject of which was afterwards talked over, while comments were generally made as they proceeded.

It is not necessary to describe the various occupations in which the family were engaged. One of the most amusing and not the least important, was the sugar-making from the neighbouring sugar-bush or maple grove, before the snow had disappeared from the ground. They were surprised at the large amount of sap which even a single tree gave forth. This being collected in wooden troughs placed under the spouts formed in the trunk, was next transferred to a huge cauldron, where it was boiled, and then turned out to cool and crystallize. They were in this way able to obtain an ample supply of sugar for their tea or coffee, for preserving fruits, and for their puddings during the year. The demand for it became considerable, when, as

the summer advanced, all sorts of wild fruits were found in the woods, and strawberries and raspberries in prodigious quantities.

The Canadian spring soon merges into full-blown summer. The boat had been for some time launched, and Philip acting as captain, with Sophy and their mother as passengers, and Harry as crew, started in her to pay their visit of welcome to D'Arcy's mother and sisters, who had just arrived at his clearing. The Ashtons were very much pleased with them. They were just what they expected D'Arcy's relatives would be. Sophy had not been to the clearing for some time; D'Arcy invited her to accompany him over it. On one side stood a cottage almost completed. D'Arcy produced a plan. "That is what it will look like when it is finished," he observed. "For whom is this?" asked Sophy. "For my mother and sisters," was the answer. "Then who is to inhabit your house?" asked Sophy, though the moment she had uttered the words she wished that she had kept silence. "I shall be very miserable, if you are not its mistress," said D'Arcy.

They were the first couple married in the new church at the settlement, mainly built by Mr. Ashton's exertions. He had hitherto, from his first arrival, conducted a service at his own house, open to all who would attend.

Mr. Norman wrote to Mr. Ashton to say that he would pay him a visit. "I have come on business," he said after the usual greetings were over. "I am a patriot, and I am anxious for the improvement of the country. Your sons are excellent young men, with talent and sense. The education of the two younger is not complete, and Philip might improve his agricultural knowledge with advantage to himself as well as to the province. On these grounds I beg to invite them to take up their residence at my house at Toronto, while they take advantage of the very liberal means of instruction which that city affords. There are some important lectures on agriculture which are about to commence. Charley should go to Upper Canada College, and Harry to the University; and, my dear sir, as I have no young people depending on me, you must allow me to defray all expenses."

Mr. Ashton could not decline so generous an offer. It is possible that Harry and Charley were slightly disappointed at having to go to school again, but Philip was most thankful for the advantage offered him. D'Arcy undertook to assist Mr. Ashton in his labours on the farm during Philip's absence. The three brothers started together. Their life in Toronto was very different to what it had been in the bush — round hats, frock-coats, and Wellington boots, superseded wide-awakes, shooting-jackets, and hobnailed shoes or mocassins ; and their hammers, saws, and axes, were exchanged for books, while social meetings of various sorts occupied many of the evenings when there were no lectures to attend. Harry and Charley now and then sighed for the woods and their lake, but as they took long walks every day, their health in no way suffered by the change ;—indeed, they could not help confessing, that however pleasant it might be to carpenter, and dig, and look after their horses and cows, and to sail and row on the lake, they had brains which might be employed to some better purpose, if those brains were properly culti-

vated; so they stuck manfully to their studies and made a progress which surprised even themselves. “I believe that it is the fine clear weather of this climate which helps us,” observed Harry; “I know that I feel twice as bright as I used to do in England.”

Philip found ample occupation in a variety of ways, and said that he felt as if his old college days had come back, as he sat in the study his kind friend had given him, surrounded by his books and papers. Duty had made him turn back-woodsman; his inclination would certainly have led him in a different course of life. He in time formed many agreeable acquaintances, both among the families residing in the city and the single men.

“By-the-bye, Ashton,” said one of his acquaintances, with whom he was walking home from a lecture, “I met last night, at Mrs. Stewart’s, a lady of your name, a very pretty and agreeable girl, though rather grave perhaps. She has only just arrived with a family of the name of Mason, who have come out to settle. There are a number of young Masons, and she was spoken of as the gover-

ness, but from the way she was treated she is rather a companion friend of Mrs. Mason's, I should think."

"I know of no relation of ours likely to come out here," said Philip, at the same time a very curious sensation circling round his heart. "Did you hear her Christian name?" "No; they only called her Miss Ashton," said his friend. "She sang, and very sweetly." "What is she like?" asked Philip. His friend began to suspect that he was interested in the stranger, and he replied, "I told you that she is pretty, with clear eyes, a fine forehead, and regular features, and rather short than tall, I should say. A good figure, certainly, and a bright complexion; no, not always,—it brightened up, I remember, when she was speaking; and her hair, that was not light,—was it black or brown?—yes, I am certain, a rich brown. There, I have given you the fair stranger's portrait to the best of my power." "Very extraordinary. Where do the Masons live?" asked Philip. "I will ask Mrs. Stewart, and get you introduced to them," said his friend. "You will not find them where there are balls or common gaieties

going on, I suspect. "That makes it still more probable," thought Philip. He made very few notes that evening of the lecture he had attended.

There was to be a private missionary meeting at Mrs. Stewart's house, and Philip and his brother received an invitation. There were many of his Toronto acquaintances in the room, the rest were strangers. He looked round the different rooms in vain for Mary Ashton, for she it was, once his affianced wife, whom he expected to meet. Two young ladies answered somewhat the description his friend had given him, still he did not like to ask if a Miss Ashton was present, lest his hopes should be rudely dashed to the ground. The speakers had not arrived, and people were moving about from room to room. He tried to compose his feelings by talking to his acquaintance on the subject of the mission about to be advocated. While he was talking Harry came to him, and, touching his elbow, said, "Phil, I have just been introduced to a very nice person, who, curious enough, has our name. I do not know if she knew mine, but I saw her afterwards watching me round the room, and

I want you to find out who she can be. She may be a cousin of the fiftieth degree, perhaps, and I should like to find some relations out here."

Philip did not stop to hear more, but hurrying into the room his brother mentioned, he satisfied himself that Mary Ashton was really there. She discovered him. He advanced, and saw by the pleased expression of her countenance that he might venture to take a seat by her side. Explanation quickly followed. He told her how he had come out to Canada, and how successful he and his family had been in establishing a home for themselves in the wilderness.

"I have a very different tale to tell," she said with a sigh, and her countenance grew sad. "My home is broken up. The wealth my poor father so suddenly acquired has been dissipated and lost. Without the necessary experience for business, or, perhaps, I should say wanting the calculating craft of the successful speculator, he suffered himself to be involved in transactions of an extensive nature, which he was led to believe would double his wealth. They proved to be the

fraudulent schemes of sharpers, planned for their own profit and my father's ruin. It was in vain that he was warned of their designs—he was infatuated, and would listen to no counsel but that of his treacherous betrayers, who plunged him deeper and deeper into obligations and liabilities, which, in the end, engulfed the whole of his large fortune. He had even to fly the country to escape a prison, and is at this moment in hiding from his creditors until his affairs can be arranged. Everything had to be given up. My mother's small portion is barely sufficient to maintain her and my sisters; my brothers, ill-prepared for the lot that is before them, are abroad in the world, making their way as they best can; as for myself, not choosing to add to my mother's burdens, I have accepted the post in Mrs. Mason's family which I now occupy. She is an old and well-tried friend, who has known me from my infancy, and both she and her children regard me as one of themselves. They urged me to accompany them in their removal to Canada, and cast in my lot with theirs. What better could I do? Of my own family,

not one advised my remaining in England. I accepted my dear friend's offer—and thus it has come to pass that we meet once more."

Whether Philip and Mary Ashton understood all the interesting addresses given on that occasion may be doubted.

"I say, Harry," cried Charley, some days after this, "I am so glad that Phil is going to be married. That Mary is a nice girl, and she will make some amends for Sophy having gone away. Not that she is likely to be up to her—I should like to see the girl who could be."

A short time after the family were re-united at Ashton Clearing, to which Philip had brought his wife, Charley acknowledged that if not superior she was fully equal to Sophy. Harry had made up his mind that no employment was superior to that of a settler; and, anxious to resume it, he studied very hard while at college, and took a most creditable degree. The farm had now grown into a very pretty little estate, to which the name of Ashton was universally given. Cottages had been erected on the property, and had been eagerly taken by new comers. Saw

and grist mills had been built in the neighbourhood, and many other houses and cottages. Harry had, with his father's assistance, purchased a good-sized farm near Ashton, and had secured another for Charley, so that they might be near their father to render him the assistance he required.

His family had long known what had been Philip's secret wish. They now unanimously assured him that he might properly follow it, and entreated him to do so. It was to enter the ministry. A church was required at Ashton—the funds were forthcoming—before it was completed Philip was ordained and became its minister. Few rejoiced as much as his devoted wife at seeing his talents employed in the noblest cause in which a human being can engage.

There was one cloud in Mary Ashton's otherwise serene life—not one of her family wrote to her, and she could hear nothing about them. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton had their hearts gladdened with a visit from their sailor son Leonard, now a lieutenant, his ship having come to Quebec. From him Philip first heard of the fate of any of the

John Ashtons. "I was surprised," said Leonard, "to hear among a batch of lads just joined, the name of Thomas Ashton. He was not a prepossessing youth, but as he had evidently had a better education than the generality of those who enter the service, he had a fair prospect of doing well if he behaved properly. He did not though, and was constantly in scrapes, drunk, and disorderly. He was under confinement for such offences, when he caught the fever in the West Indies. The surgeon came one day and said that he was very ill and wished to see me. I of course went to the lad, who then told me that he knew who I was—that he was the son of John Ashton who got our property. It was dreadful to hear him speak of his father who had cheated us he declared, and cheated all his family, and every body else. He seemed to consider that he had a claim on me in consequence of our relationship. I did all I could for him by procuring him better attendance than he would otherwise have had, and by shifting him into comfortable quarters where he would get the benefit of pure air. He soon began to mend, and then I took the

liberty of reading him some serious lectures as to his past conduct and scandalous mode of life. He took my reproof in good part; and you will be pleased to hear that when he was at length restored to health, he became quite a new man—scrupulously faithful in discharge of his duty, sober to abstinence, and cheerfully obedient to orders. He has had a narrow escape from death, and is, I trust, thankful to God that he was not cut off suddenly in his mad career. He is grateful to me for the service I rendered him—says, indeed, that I saved his life; I shall take advantage of that feeling to keep him right, if I can. I have trusted him with some responsibility during my absence, and if, on my return, I find he has done well, that will afford me a pretext for helping him forward, which it would give me real pleasure to do."

Philip had little doubt but that his father and he had been deprived of their property by unfair means, though he never even breathed such an idea to his wife. He is,

however, able to assure her, with all sincerity, that he does not regret its loss, and that he is convinced that his father is happier with his children collected around him and all actively employed, than he would have been had he retained his wealth and lived on in the world of fashion.

Two of Mary's brothers found their way almost in rags to Ashton, having in vain endeavoured to find employment in England. They expressed themselves ready to work, and Harry and Charley afforded them some practical lessons, which enabled them to begin with advantage. At first they complained that their limbs ached terribly; but in a short time they had to confess that food honestly gained by hard labour, was far pleasanter than the bread of idleness. They persevered, and in the course of a few years were able to purchase land for themselves. They are now hard at work clearing it, and bid fair to become useful members of society.

Philip Ashton's sons will, undoubtedly, secure an independence; and will, probably, from their known integrity and energy, be

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